

DEFINED BY CULTURE

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FASHION, TEXTILE AND CLOTHING DESIGN
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Taiteen maisterin opinnäytteeni, *Defined by Culture*, tutkii suomalaista pukeutumisen kieltä. Työn tavoitteena oli löytää kulttuurin syvin olemus ja esittää se yhdeksän asun naistenvaatekokoelmana.

Minkälaista kieltä voi suomalainen pukeutuminen olla? Voiko kulttuurin olemuksen esittää vaateen muodossa? Minkälaisia uusia lähestymistapoja voisi hyödyntää esittäessä suomalaisuutta vaateen kautta?

Opinnäytteeni koostuu kahdesta osiosta: teoreettisesta osiosta, johon sisältyy myös teettämäni kyselytutkimus, sekä taiteellisesta produktiosta, jossa yhdeksän asukokonaisuuden kautta pohditaan niitä seikkoja, jotka mahdollisesti näyttäytyvät pukeutumisen kielenämme.

Opinnäytteen teoreettinen perusta tarkastelee pukeutumista sosiologisesta näkökulmasta, sekä kulttuurin vaikutusta niin ryhmässä kuin yksilötasollakin. Teoreettisen osion ensimmäinen puolisko pyrkii selvittämään mitä on pukeutumisen kieli; kuinka pystymme kommunikoimaan vaatetuksen avulla ja josko voimme päätellä jotakin muista ihmisistä pelkän pukeutumisen perusteella. Seuraava osio keskittyy lähemmin kulttuurisiin tekijöihin. Kappaleessa pohditaan maiden välisiä eroja ja lopulta esitellään myös joitakin suomalaisen kulttuurin perusteita. Teoreettisen osion päättää teettämäni kyselytutkimus, sekä nelikenttä, jota käytetään apuna malliston konseptoinnissa.

Opinnäytteen toinen osio koostuu suunnittelutyöstä ja prosessin kuvaamisesta. Malliston konsepti perustuu opinnäytteen tutkimustuloksiin ja osiossa avataan niitä seikkoja, jotka ovat johtaneet yhdeksän asukokonaisuuden syntyyn. Taiteellinen produktio antaa visuaalisen vastauksen tutkimuskysymyksiin, sekä selvittää niitä havaintoja, joita on tutkimuksessa saatu.

Opinnäytteen tärkeimmät tulokset liittyvät uusiin lähestymistapoihin mallistosuunnittelussa, sekä lopputulokseen, joka tulkitsee suomalaista pukeutumista.

Uskon että opinnäytteen kautta pystyin osoittamaan eräänlaisen vaihtoehdon suunnittelulle, joka tarjoaa mahdollisesti merkityksellisemmän lopputuloksen. Nelikenttää käyttämällä suunnittelija pystyy visualisoimaan kohderyhmänsä selkeämmin, mutta myös näkemään kuinka ihmiset sijoittuvat toisiinsa nähden.

Mallistossa on vaikutteita perinteisestä käsityöstä, pohjoisesta puhtaudesta, sekoittuen kuitenkin modernimpaan, urbaaniin nuorisokulttuuriin. Jotakin suomalaisen kulttuurin syvimmästä olemuksesta on varmasti ikuistettuna asukokonaisuuksissa.

Avainsanat Pukeutumisen kieli, suomalaisuus, muoti, käsityö

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Abstract

This thesis, *Defined by Culture*, studies the language of Finnish clothing. It aims to discover the essence of the culture and introduce it in a women's wear collection of 9 outfits.

What kind of a language can Finnish clothing be? Is it possible to capture the essence of a culture in an outfit? What kind of new approaches can be used in order to do that?

This thesis is divided into two parts: the theoretical part, including also a survey, and the production part, including a women's wear collection, through which those factors, that possibly appear as the essence of Finnishness in clothing, are discussed.

The theoretical part of the thesis is focused on the sociological aspect of dressing as well as the cultural impact to an individual along with groups. These topics are researched through literature reviews. The first half of the theoretical part is focused on the language of clothing; it examines how we communicate through clothing and whether something can be deduced from different outfits. The second half of the theoretical part is focused on the cultural aspect, discussing the differences between nations and finally introducing some of the basis of Finnish culture. The theoretical part concludes with a survey, and with introducing the positioning map that is used as a tool to conceptualize the collection.

The second part of the thesis is devoted to the design process and production. The concept of the collection is created based on the theoretical part and the results of the survey. The method of approach is explained as well as the design process that leads to the production of 9 outfits.

The second part of the thesis gives a visual answer to the research questions and clarifies the observations of the data.

The main results of the thesis are specific to new approaches when designing a collection, as well as the one possible interpretation of Finnish language of clothing.

Through this thesis I believe I was able to demonstrate a possibility that might give more meaningful outcome for a designer to create a collection. By using a positioning map, gives the designer a possibility to visualize the target group more clearly, who are they as individuals, but more importantly, how are they positioned in relation to other people.

The collection shows influences of the traditional craftsmanship and some subtle hints of the Nordic purity that are mixed together with the more modern and urban youth culture. Some of the essence of the Finnish culture is certainly captured in the outfits.

Keywords Language of clothes, Finnish culture, Fashion design, Handcraft,



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1

INTRODUCTION

“

BEFORE WE SPEAK WE COLLECT
IMPORTANT INFORMATION, OR
MISINFORMATION ABOUT EACH OTHER'S
PERSONAL INTERESTS. WE MAY NOT BE
ABLE TO PUT WHAT WE OBSERVE INTO
WORDS, BUT WE REGISTER THE
INFORMATION UNCONSCIOUSLY. THE
OTHER ONE HAS DONE THE SAME TO YOU,
SO EVEN BEFORE YOU SAID ANYTHING,
YOU'VE ALREADY SPOKEN TO EACH OTHER
IN AN OLD AND MORE UNIVERSAL TONGUE.

ALISON LURIE, THE LANGUAGE OF CLOTHES, 1983

1.1. BACKGROUND

In 2013, before I started my Master studies, I had the trip of a lifetime. I took a year off and left on my own, backpacked through Siberia, explored Asia and eventually ended up in Australia. I find it quite peculiar how meaningful your own nationality might become right after you leave your home country.

I was on my way to Beijing in the trans-Siberian train, somewhere in the middle of the Gobi Desert, when an Australian guy called David came to sit in my cabin. We introduced ourselves, but before I had a chance to reveal my background, without really knowing anything about me, he guessed I was Finnish. I was fascinated. What on earth gave me away? We talked about appearance and what makes us look the way we do, about our favorite styles and what we would never wear. Whether David's guess was just a happy coincidence or if I was actually screaming miles away as the woman from the far off and weird country called Finland, I was kind of intrigued about the possibility of the second option.

My travels continued all the way to Australia where I met Aki. However, at that moment I didn't know he was from Finland, but I could certainly guess that: it was his whole appearance that was so charmingly familiar to me in such a dorky way and his contrast to people around him that was so striking. Oh dear, did David see me the same way?

I met a lot of people from different countries, backgrounds and cultures, yet one of the most typical questions people asked first, regardless of their origin, "was where do you come from?". It certainly made me wonder how much our own culture and

nationality defines, how we appear to other people, and how much do we believe in stereotypes? Throughout the year, as I was continually repeating coming from Finland, I often found myself thinking about the Finnish culture; what it is and what it means to me, as well as whether others see the nuances of that culture the same way. Is my interpretation the right one? Especially now, at the time when Finland is 100-years old, the question is relevant. Is my Finland the same as yours?

The whole psychology behind the clothes and the sociological aspect of dressing is very appealing. According to Alison Lurie clothes are like a language, and as with speech, there are several language of dressing. "As in speech also in clothing every individual has his own stock of words and employs personal variations of tone and meaning" (Lurie, 1983, p.4). How we choose to dress tells a lot about ourselves as individuals, but also as a group. On an individual level, clothes reveal '*gender differences, class, levels of education, cultures of origin, confidence or diffidence, occupational roles against our evening leisure*' as were listed by Miller in his book *Stuff* (Miller, 2009). Yet not all Finnish people I met, looked like Finnish people and not all Swedish looked as stylish as one could expect, in fact it isn't all that easy to speculate one's origin based alone on the appearance. Nevertheless, I wondered what was it then that made Aki, or me in that matter, look more Finnish than the other ones? What were the Finnish factors that exposed us? In what ways might our culture affect our identity and the way that we dress? Or does it? What can we really tell about a person based on what they wear?

What I really kept on asking myself and became increasingly keen on researching, was what kind of a language can Finnish clothing be?

1.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I wanted to not only research the Finnish language of clothing, but also create something tangible out of it. For me stories are best told visually, which is why I decided to design a women's wear collection that would tell a visual story about being a Finn, what do we communicate through clothing? I wanted to learn how people choose their clothes, what factors lead to the decision and how that could be shown visually. What does an outfit tell about a culture? And how much does a culture affect to the way we decide to dress? Is it possible to capture the essence of a culture in an outfit?

The goal wasn't to resolve the whole language of Finnish clothing. It is probably safe to say, it would be too wide of a subject and impossible to cover such a large amount of data in a Master's thesis. The goal was to rather give one possible answer, what kind of a language could Finnish clothing be and how could that be presented visually.

From an early stage I knew I needed to hear the answers from people. I wanted to challenge myself to expand that typical design process in order to make, not only the process itself, but the outcome more meaningful. There had to be something more meaningful or new in the process I had used. Thus, I didn't want to be the author of this story, it needed to be the Finnish people. I considered myself mostly just as an editor, I didn't want to affect the answers too much myself.

The challenge was to create a method that would show the connection between the answers and the visual material. How are the reasons that led me to make certain decisions shown? How is the bridge between the spoken word and visual outcome created?

1.3. APPROACHES

My thesis is a user-centered design study. I use literature reviews, data gained through the interviews and survey I conducted, as well as experimental material and surface design research.

The users, which in this case are the Finnish people, are in the central position for the creation, which in this case means the clothes. The theoretical knowledge is gathered through the literature reviews, as the survey and interviews are conducted in order to gain the understanding of the needs and contexts around the topic. I use positioning map as a method of approach to analyze and conceptual-

ize the answers. The results of the thesis are then visually presented in the final clothing collection including 9 outfits.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

1.4.

My thesis is divided roughly into two parts: the research, which includes the theoretical part as well as the survey, and the design, which includes the description of the design process and the production of the collection.

The theoretical part of my thesis is focused on the sociological aspect of dressing as well as the cultural impact to an individual along with groups. These topics are researched through literature reviews. The first half of the theoretical part is focused on the language of clothing. It examines how we communicate through clothing and whether something can be deduced from different outfits. The second half of the theoretical part starts by explaining the very basics of the cultural aspects of clothing and everyday life, followed by discussion of the differences between nations. Eventually, some of the essences of Finnish culture is introduced through examples in relation to classical design objects. The goal of the theoretical part is to offer information and arise questions to implement the survey.

The research section concludes with the survey. I explain how I ended up choosing this research approach, starting with the conducted semi-constructed interviews, followed by the survey and ending up with using the positioning map as a tool to conceptualize the collection. In this section I also discuss the benefits and limitations of my research approach. The goal of the survey is to provide answers that will then be visualized through the collection.

The second part of the thesis is devoted to the design process and production. Based on the theoretical part and the results of the survey, I have made conclusions upon how I create the concept for my collection. I explain the method of approach as well as the design process that leads to the production of 9 outfits; how I justify my decisions and what led to these particular designs. The second part of my thesis gives a visual answer to my research questions and clarifies the observations of the data.

The second part is followed by the conclusion, where the results of this thesis are discussed. This part also includes self-evaluation and a general discussion of the whole process.

(1)

Next Page

Jaakko Heikkilä

**Jesus stands on the Swedish
side, 1999-2010 - Photography**

Picture taken in Kukkola, Finland

Photo: Jaakko Heikkilä



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a calm body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river. The water is a deep blue-grey color, reflecting the sky. In the foreground, two large, dark, rounded rocks are partially submerged in the water. The sky is a clear, light blue, and there are some faint, wispy clouds near the horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

PART **1**

RESEARCH

2

LANGUAGE OF CLOTHING

“

CLOTHES ARE AMONG OUR MOST PERSONAL
POSSESSIONS. THEY ARE THE MAIN MEDIUM
BETWEEN OUR SENSE OF OUR BODIES AND OUR
SENSE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD.

DANIEL MILLER, STUFF, 2009

CLOTHING AND COMMUNICATION

2.1.

The interaction between people is the key to the sociological aspect of dressing. Nonverbal communication is an important tool for conveying even the very basic social attitudes (Helkama, Myllyniemi & Llebkind, 2001). These wordless messages are multiple times more effective than spoken language as was researched in Michael Argyles and his team's study about contradiction between the content of the speech and nonverbal messaging (Argyle, 1975). The team studied which message wins: the friendliness in the content of the speech, or the hostility of the style and vice versa. They also studied what happens when the message is commanding but the style submissive, or when the message is submissive but the style is commanding. The results were unambiguous in all cases: the nonverbal messaging was more effective as the messages are received immediately and therefore can't be ignored.

As dressing up is part of our wordless linguistic; a nonverbal sign system; it is therefore important to understand its influence. Clothes themselves are neutral, but using them is social. As Calefato stated (2004, p.5), "clothing is explicitly considered as a kind of bodily disguise, just as language is a disguise for thought".

Indeed, Alison Lurie claimed in 1983 in her book *The Language of Clothes* that there are various languages of dress, with their own vocabulary and grammar. In one aspect, clothing can be seen as direct communication between people, where messages are sent and received. In *Fashion as Communication*, Barnard (1996, p.30) explains this as following: "It is by the means of the garment that one person intends to communicate their message to another person. The message, on this account, is the sender's intention and it is this that is transmitted by the garment in the communication process. The message is also, of course, what is received by the receiver. The sorts of thing that are most important on this account of communication are the sender's intention, the efficiency of the transmission process and the effect on the receiver". In Barnard's view, conveying the message is more in the hands of the sender and rather passively collected by the receiver (Barnard, 1996). But as communication is more complex than just about sending messages, it requires further examination and completion.

From the semiotic point of view, the receiver's role is far more active than the one sending the message. The sender writes the story of the message, but it is eventually the receiver's own experiences, attitudes and emotions that bring meaning to the text. So basically, how well the message is conveyed, depends on how relevant and significant the content of it becomes in the mind of the receiver (Fiske, 1990). Fiske (1990, p.39) explains it this way: "for communication to take place I have to create a message out of signs. This message stimulates you to create a meaning for yourself that relates in some way to the meaning that I generated in my message in the first place. The more we share the same codes, the more we use the same sign system, the closer our two 'meanings' of the message will approximate to each other".

As it was noted above, Barnard explains the communication as *sending and receiving messages* (Barnard, 1996), but the *"semiotic or structuralist model understands communication as 'the production and exchange of meanings'"* (Fiske, 1990). Although, these don't necessarily rule each other out. Clothing as a phenomena is a complex entirety and we may handle the language of signs differently, what seems obvious for some, may be disputable for others. "Today, the word 'language' does not simply refer to a verbal system, but involves all those sign systems with which human beings give shape to their relation to the world" (Calefato, 2004, p.5).

2.2.

LEXICON OF THE WARDROBE

As Lurie states, same features that are emblematic in speech, can also be found in the language of clothing. This may include characteristics such as *'modern and ancient words, words of native and foreign origin, dialect words, colloquialism, slang and vulgarities'* listed in Lurie's book *The Language of Clothes* (Lurie, 1983.). Just as someone has a versatile vocabulary, polished and formal speech or vulgar expression, the same style can also be perceived in clothing (Lurie, 1983) as can be seen from the pictures on the next page.

Giving a meaning to a garment happens eventually in the mind of its viewer, as the clothes can both connect people with similar language but also separate the ones that are unfamiliar to each other. Clothes work both as a fence, guarding the territory, and as a bridge, connecting the territory (Nuutinen, 2004). Fences are obviously there to keep people apart, or as in clothing it outlines one group from another. Bridges however join groups, which links individuals to share opinions and opens up a platform for conversation and multitude (Barnard, 1996). Take youth culture as an example of this. Peer support subculture, with a strong we-concept, and a social aspiration to delineate out those who can't adapt to the values and identities, like the older generations. The ideology is often strongly determined through clothing; the clothes represent the group. The adolescents for example often indicate their dissatisfaction with the adult values by clothing that provokes negative feelings among the adults. As Lurie states (1983, p.8), "casual dress, like casual speech tends to be loose, relaxed and colorful. It often contains what might be called 'slang words'(...). These garments could not be worn on a formal occasion without causing disapproval, but in ordinary circumstances they pass without remark".

Memberships are communicated and established before being an actual member of a social group, not the other way around (Barnard, 1996). This means that certain elements that unify a group are established through communication before becoming a part of it. Barnard also suggests that through clothing people communicate their social group's values, hopes and beliefs (Barnard, 1996). Clothes give freedom of expression to individuals, but more importantly, it gives the society's

Four different styles that speak four different languages. Two ladies in flower dresses, that refers to something very practical and rural, yet remarkably feminine (2). Top right picture could be considered as "slang words". It is rather vulgar as it gets immediate attention (3). The complete opposite are the royal families, emphasising sophistication and high class (4). Carefreeness and comfortability refers to something casual: "casual dress, like casual speech tends to be loose, relaxed and colorful" (Lurie, 1983) (5)





All of the pictures chosen for this spread resonates with the identities of the artists. The art works

(6)

Zoe Buckman,

Every Curve, 2016 - Installation

Buckman's body of work, Every Curve, explores the contradictory and complimentary influences of Feminism and Hip-Hop in her upbringing. The story is told through the clothes.

Photo: Zoe Buckman Art, 2015

acceptance or disapproval. For example, as Lurie also states, “‘vulgar words’ in dress give emphasis and get immediate attention in almost any circumstances, just as they do in speech” (Lurie, 1983, p.8). So perhaps rather than focusing on the individuality, we should talk about the social style. Van Leeuwen states in 2005, that social style is driven by external values and is discovered from social circumstances that are out of our control. The role of an individual doesn't disappear in social style, but its meaning diminishes (Van Leeuwen, 2005.). Fashion and dressing up is always social, so what we consider embarrassing to wear is generally decided socially as well. Being ashamed or embarrassed are uncomfortable social emotions about how we appear to others and to ourselves. Shahram explains in *Psychology Today*, that in order to feel shameful, we must be aware how people around us are making judgements. Existing set of social norms conclude how the situation is eventually experienced (Heshman, Shahram, *Psychology Today* 2015). A classic example, when going to a party and feeling like you're completely overdressed, or underdressed for that matter, when compared to everyone else. By dressing completely differently to most of the people around, you may also say one's opinion out loud.

However, even though the language of clothing is the most visible and revealing method of communication, it is far from being watertight as it is very easy to misinterpret. As Lurie said (1983), when we only have one goal in dressing, such as attending to a cocktail party, going for a run or getting married, interpretation of an outfit is least



(7)

Above

Miguel Vallinas

Roots, 2016 - Photography

In **Miguel Vallinas'** project *Roots*, he describes through his photographs how identities are formed.

"*Roots* searches once more in human nature for 'what we believe we are, what others think we are, what we really are and what we would like to be', demonstrating that there is a reason for these beings to sprout from the root." - Vallinas

(8)

Right

Ulla Pohjola

A self-portrait, 2002 - Hand and machine made embroidery

Finnish textile artist who does some soul-searching by embroidering the feelings into a garment.





problematic. However, our motives in making statements are often more complex, just as it is in speech, therefore all requirements might not be attained (Lurie, 1983). We may say silly things, yet maintain elegance and sophistication, just as in dressing. The difficulty in reading the language of clothes today, occurs in a rather equal society, as ours is. Barthes states (2006, p.21) "since the Renaissance there have been works on clothing: these either had archaeological aims (with ancient clothing for example), or else they were inventories of clothes governed by social conditions: these inventories are veritable lexicons, linking vestimentary systems very tightly either to anthropological states (sex, age marital status) or on social ones (bourgeoisie, nobility, peasantry, etc.), but it is clear that this sort of lexicon of clothing was possible only in a society which was starkly hierarchical, in which fashion was part of a real social ritual".

So what can we tell then? Generalizing it could be said, that at least the age, the gender and the social status. Differentiating age and youth have always been part of clothing: generally, more mature clothing means dressing more formally and conservatively (Lurie, 1983), so basically, how we cover our bodies. Showing social status through clothes has existed for thousands of years; certain designs have always indicated high or royal rank (Lurie, 1983). Instead of how, it is about what we cover ourselves with.

But as stated earlier, the more we share the same codes, the more we use the same sign system. In other words, the closer our values, beliefs and ideologies come, the more probable it is to understand the meaning of the message; and for the same reason we might misinterpret the significance of an outfit. Or then, we just don't pay enough attention. As Hodge and Kress state in their book *Social Semiotics*, in reading signs, we easily look for relatively simple and self-contained signs, when we actually should concentrate on more dispersed signs and metasigns (detail in a system of signs) (Hodges&Kress, 1988). This is often the case with stereotypes.

"Dress is an aspect of human life that arouses strong feelings, some intensely pleasant and others very disagreeable" (Lurie, 1983). For instance, as can be seen in Marie Rime's Masques (Picture 9), where the message can be interpreted ambivalently, as it can be seen either something frightening or in contrast as something silly and comical. How we cover ourselves, resonates with the social environment we live in. The street art (picture 10), where the male bodies have been covered with black paint by a street artist named Princess Hijab, aims to fight for the rights of minorities. The message becomes more powerful as the hijab has a strong symbolic value.

Indeed, what is certain is that communication is rather a multi-disciplinary area of study, that involves signs and codes (Fiske, 1990). We can agree, that there are many ways of communicating and rarely only one right one. Dressing is always social, since the communication needs interaction between people. When talking about shared values and ideologies, culture's role shouldn't be understated either, which is why it also requires further examination. The next chapter focuses on how cultural differences determine how we dress, and therefore communicate as well. But despite, or because of the individual values, ideologies and beliefs, the social aspect of dressing up is crucial in how we end up looking each day, because "whether we wish to admit it or not, all of us worry about the image we present to others because it shows the self-image we present to ourselves" (Norman, 2005).

(9)

Marie Rime

Masques - Photography

Inspired by tribal art and its connection to the notion of conflict. Marie creates the language through the Masques, that evoke different feelings, depending of the viewers interpretation. She says: "When I started this project I asked myself wheter players are trying to seduce or disturb or intimidate their opponents...But now I think it's everything at once".

On the next page, the artists works deal with social issues through clothes. The message is based on how we interpret the language of clothing.

(10)

Princess Hijab

Untitled, 2010 - Street Art

An anonymous street artist, who veils the models on big fashion advertisement campaigns with black paint. Her work has sparked debates about feminism and fundamentalism.

(11)

Claudia Casarino

Sleep Disorder, 2011 - Installation

Tulle garments installation that aims to fight against the women's issues and stereotypes. "These are nightgowns that go from white to red through shades of pink. Like escalating from a dream to a nightmare, like when you have a promise of a new horizon and then you find yourself trapped in the human trafficking networks. It is about that.

I think that when you talk about women's issues through clothing, your ideas can be easily read. Our bodies have been covered by layers of ideologies, basically". - Claudia Casarino in Metal magazine's interview by Erwan Filidori

Photo: Haupt & Binder







(12)

Jaakko Heikkilä

Jesus stands on the Swedish side, 1999-2010 - Photography

In Ebba's Living Room

Heikkilä was photographing a Finnish minority group in Kukkola, Finland, between 1999-2010. Something "very Finnish" is captured in the picture.

3

DEFINED BY CULTURE

“

IT IS THROUGH FASHION AND CLOTHING THAT
WE ARE CONSTITUTED AS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
BEINGS, THAT WE DECODE OUR SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL MILIEU.

MALCOLM BARNARD, FASHION AS COMMUNICATION, 1996

As discussed in the previous chapter, the interaction between people creates the language of clothing. The clarity of the message is dependent on how much we use similar sign systems. Then what role does the culture have in this interaction?

In all simplicity culture is the social behavior and norms found in human societies (Macdonis & Gerber, 2011). Culture is strongly connected to one's identity, yet it is still not inherited, as Hofstede affirmed (1997, p.4), "it derives from one's social environment, not from one's genes". According to Hofstede (1997, p.5) "it is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learnt".

The word itself is rather multi-dimensional, although especially in western societies the word culture has generally signified civilization or refinements such as education, art and literature (Hofstede, 1997). Yet, it is good to take into account that culture as a phenomenon is a lot more complex and colorful than just the more visible actions whose objective is to refine the mind. Each culture has also a handful of its own ordinary, menial things like eating, greeting, showing emotions or keeping a physical distance. These basic human processes make each culture unique, as they concurrently find their way to be read from the more visual actions, supposed to refine the mind, like art, design and literature (Hofstede, 1997), and that is, from our clothing as well. It is then only relevant to take a closer look at the cultural aspect of dressing, and especially the differences between nations.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

3.1.

"Fashion is free speech, and one of the privileges of a free world." - Alison Lurie, 1983

Obviously there are clear differences between cultures, in some the differences are bigger than in others. Self evident to say, it is more probable for a Finn to experience culture shock in Brazil than in Sweden. But where does it actually base itself? What is the culture's role in our dressing?

Fashion and dressing up is always social. We dress ourselves for others and we dress up to fulfill a need. That need is dependent on the culture and the society we are living in, and how allowing or restricting it might be. Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions construe and compare the impact of a society's culture on its members. Hofstede researched IBM employees in similar positions, but in over 50 different countries. This survey was eventually able to recognize four dimensions: power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity. The original theory presented these four dimensions, however, Hofstede completed the model later on with a fifth and sixth new dimensions: long-term orientation and indulgence versus self-restraint. Nevertheless, I will only focus on the four originals, since there is no reliable information about Finland.



(13)

Leonce Raphael Agbodjelou, Jack Bell Gallery
 Untitled (Egungun series), 2011 - Photography
 Traditional voodoo outfits from Benin

The power distance index (PDI) measures the dependence and relationship between authority and subordinates, and how acceptable they found their situation; in other words, the inequality in each society **(1)**. The higher the value is, the more clearly hierarchy is established and implemented without doubt and reason. The lower the value is, the more people question the authority and the distribution of the power (Hofstede, 1997). When the power distance value is high, also showing the status is very common.

Russia for instance has one of the highest power distance degree, and as my Russian friend pointed out, *Russians tend to dress as well as their salaries will allow*: black suits, furs and jewelries are not rarities in the street scene. However, the high value in power distance also indicates a high inequality in the society; as much as there is wealth there is poverty as well.

Countries that score lower values on individualism (IDV) emphasize the “I” versus the “we”, individuality is more appreciated, the identity is based on individual values and low-context communication is customary **(2.)**. On the contrary with the higher degree countries, where collectivism is big part of the society, identity is based on the social network and the communication is more context-rich (Hofstede, 1997).

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) is defined as a society's tolerance for ambiguity **(3)**. In high degree societies the codes of behavior, guidelines and laws are stiff and more precise, and the rules are followed. In a lower degree countries, the society is more approving towards differing ideas and thoughts and the environment is more free-flowing (Hofstede, 1997).

A high score in masculinity (MAS) means that the society is motivated by a value system that thrives on competition, achievement and success. Success is measured through winners and losers. The competing and desire for success

1. Power distance index (PDI) values for 67 countries

Score rank	Country or region	PDI score	Score rank	Country or region	PDI score
1	Malaysia	104	31-36	Thailand	64
2/3	Guatemala	95	31-36	Zambia	64
2/3	Panama	95	37/38	Chile	63
4	Russia	93	37/38	Portugal	63
5	Philippines	94	39	Uruguay	61
6/7	Mexico	81	40/41	Greece	60
6/7	Venezuela	81	40/41	South Korea	60
8-15	China	80	42/43	Iran	58
8-15	Egypt	80	42/43	Taiwan	58
8-15	Iraq	80	44/45	Czech Republic	57
8-15	Kuwait	80	44/45	Spain	57
8-15	Lebanon	80	46	Pakistan	55
8-15	Libya	80	47	Japan	54
8-15	Saudi Arabia	80	48	Italy	50
8-15	United Arab Emirates	80	49/50	Argentina	49
16/17	Ecuador	78	49/50	South Africa	49
16/17	Indonesia	78	51	Hungary	46
18-21	Ghana	77	52	Jamaica	45
18-21	India	77	53	United States	40
18-21	Nigeria	77	54	Netherlands	38
18-21	Sierra Leone	77	55	Australia	36
22	Singapore	74	56-58	Costa Rica	35
23	Brazil	69	56-58	Germany	35
24-26	France	68	56-58	United Kingdom	35
24-26	Hong Kong	68	59	Switzerland	34
24-26	Poland	68	60	Finland	33
27	Colombia	67	61/62	Norway	31
28/29	El Salvador	66	61/62	Sweden	31
28/29	Turkey	66	63	Ireland	28
30	Belgium	65	64	New Zealand	22
31-36	Ethiopia	64	65	Denmark	18
31-36	Kenya	64	66	Israel	13
31-36	Peru	64	67	Austria	11
31-36	Tanzania	64			

Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions that identifies systematic differences between nations on four dimensions: power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity.

The results show for example high power distance values for Latin countries as well as for Asian, African and Arab countries, and lower values for non-Latin European countries, North America and Australia along with New Zealand.

2. Individualism index (IDV) values for 67 countries

Score rank	Country or region	IDV score	Score rank	Country or region	IDV score
1	United States	91	29-36	Saudi Arabia	38
2	Australia	90	29-36	United Arab Emirates	38
3	United Kingdom	89	37	Turkey	37
4	Netherlands	80	38	Uruguay	36
5	New Zealand	79	39	Greece	35
6	Italy	76	40	Philippines	32
7	Belgium	75	41	Mexico	30
8	Denmark	74	42-46	Ethiopia	27
9/10	France	71	42-46	Kenya	27
9/10	Sweden	71	42-46	Portugal	27
11	Ireland	70	42-46	Tanzania	27
12	Norway	69	42-46	Zambia	27
13	Switzerland	68	47	Malaysia	26
14	Germany	67	48	Hong Kong	25
15	South Africa	65	49	Chile	23
16	Finland	63	50-55	China	20
17	Poland	60	50-55	Ghana	20
18	Czech Republic	58	50-55	Nigeria	20
19/20	Austria	55	50-55	Sierra Leone	20
19/20	Hungary	55	50-55	Singapore	20
21	Israel	54	50-55	Thailand	20
22	Spain	51	55	El Salvador	19
23	India	48	57	South Korea	18
24/25	Argentina	46	58	Taiwan	17
24/25	Japan	46	59	Peru	16
26	Iran	41	60	Costa Rica	15
27/28	Jamaica	39	61/62	Indonesia	14
27/28	Russia	39	61/62	Pakistan	14
29-36	Brazil	38	63	Colombia	13
29-36	Egypt	38	64	Venezuela	12
29-36	Iraq	38	65	Panama	11
29-36	Kuwait	38	66	Ecuador	8
29-36	Lebanon	38	67	Guatemala	6
29-36	Libya	38			

3. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) values for 67 countries

Score rank	Country or region	UAI score	Score rank	Country or region	UAI score
1	Greece	112	30-36	Saudi Arabia	68
2	Portugal	104	30-36	United Arab Emirates	68
3	Guatemala	101	37	Ecuador	67
4	Uruguay	100	38	Germany	65
5	Russia	95	39	Thailand	64
6/7	Belgium	94	40/41	Finland	59
6/7	El Salvador	94	40/41	Iran	59
8	Poland	93	42	Switzerland	58
9	Japan	92	43-45	Ghana	54
10	Peru	87	43-45	Nigeria	54
11-16	Argentina	86	43-45	Sierra Leone	54
11-16	Chile	86	46	Netherlands	53
11-16	Costa Rica	86	47-50	Ethiopia	52
11-16	France	86	47-50	Kenya	52
11-16	Panama	86	47-50	Tanzania	52
11-16	Spain	86	47-50	Zambia	52
17/18	South Korea	85	51	Australia	51
17/18	Turkey	85	52	Norway	50
19/20	Hungary	82	53/54	New Zealand	49
19/20	Mexico	82	53/54	South Africa	49
21	Israel	81	55	Indonesia	48
22	Colombia	80	56	United States	46
23/24	Brazil	76	57	Philippines	44
23/24	Venezuela	76	58/59	China	40
25	Italy	75	58/59	India	40
26	Czech Republic	74	60	Malaysia	36
27/28	Austria	70	61/62	Ireland	35
27/28	Pakistan	70	61/62	United Kingdom	35
29	Taiwan	69	63/64	Hong Kong	29
30-36	Egypt	68	63/64	Sweden	29
30-36	Iraq	68	65	Denmark	23
30-36	Kuwait	68	66	Jamaica	13
30-36	Lebanon	68	67	Singapore	8
30-36	Libya	68			

4. Masculinity Index (MAS) values for 67 countries

Score rank	Country or region	MAS score	Score rank	Country or region	MAS score
1	Japan	95	34/35	Malaysia	50
2	Hungary	88	34/35	Pakistan	50
3	Austria	79	36	Brazil	49
4	Venezuela	73	37	Singapore	48
5/6	Italy	70	38	Israel	47
5/6	Switzerland	70	39-42	Ghana	46
7	Mexico	69	39-42	Indonesia	46
8/9	Ireland	68	39-42	Nigeria	46
8/9	Jamaica	68	39-42	Sierra Leone	46
10-12	China	66	43/44	Taiwan	45
10-12	Germany	66	43/44	Turkey	45
10-12	United Kingdom	66	45	Panama	44
13-15	Colombia	64	46/47	France	43
13-15	Philippines	64	46/47	Iran	43
13-15	Poland	64	48/49	Peru	42
16/17	Ecuador	63	48/49	Spain	42
16/17	South Africa	63	50-53	Ethiopia	41
18	United States	62	50-53	Kenya	41
19	Australia	61	50-53	Tanzania	41
20	New Zealand	58	50-53	Zambia	41
21-23	Czech Republic	57	54	El Salvador	40
21-23	Greece	57	55	South Korea	39
21-23	Hong Kong	57	56	Uruguay	38
24/25	Argentina	56	57	Guatemala	37
24/25	India	56	58	Russia	36
26	Belgium	54	59	Thailand	34
27-33	Egypt	52	60	Portugal	31
27-33	Iraq	52	61	Chile	28
27-33	Kuwait	52	62	Finland	26
27-33	Lebanon	52	63	Costa Rica	21
27-33	Libya	52	64	Denmark	16
27-33	Saudi Arabia	52	65	Netherlands	14
27-33	United Arab Emirates	52	66	Norway	8
			67	Sweden	5

(14) Kyoto - 2013

Japanese lady wearing a Kimono on an afternoon, in the city center of Kyoto



starts already in school and continues later on in work life **(4.)**. In feminine societies, the quality of life measures the success and the people work in order to live, not other way around (Retrieved from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/finland/>). The higher the value, the more masculine the society is, which means that the traditional gender roles are also more recognizably divided. With the score of 95, Japan is one of the most masculine societies in the world. Competition is part of the culture throughout the life: from kindergarten all the way to the corporate world. The ambition for perfection in every aspect of life such as material production, services and presentation is constantly present (Retrieved from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/japan/>).



In 2013 on my trip, I visited my relative that has been living in Japan, in a small countryside town for over 40 years. The world she introduced me to was rather conservative, had a hard work ethic, with a strong sense of hierarchy and was thriving for perfection, which is typical for a masculine society. It was also very polite and humble, with a high devotion towards aesthetics.

In this town, these values were noticeably carried through their clothes: in work life especially appearance held high value and

(15) Left

Tokyo - 2013

Some formal dressing in the busy evening Tokyo



(16) Left

**Adam Wiseman,
National Geographics, 2017**

"Maria Luisa Mendoza de Cruz brushes wool in preparation for spinning at her home in Casa Cruz, Oaxaca".

(17) Right

**Timo Kelaranta
Helena Kekkonen, Karttula 1980
From the book: Oi Maamme!**



(18) Left
Eva Haeberle, LAIF/REDUX
National Geographics, 2017
"A cowboy rests near his car at Cattleman's Days-Reodeo in Gunnison, Colorado".

(19) Below
Jouko Lehtola
Untitled / Urban Youth 1998-1999
A glimpse into Finnish youth culture in 1998-1999
From the book: Oi Maamme!

was relatively strict - formality and dark colors were favored, nothing that would be too provocative or visible from the crowd, unless it was a traditional Kimono. On the other hand, beauty and harmony were in high value, which allowed the casual dressing break the stiffness. As my relative said, no one wants to offend anyone with their behavior, whether through words or dress.

Yet, when talking about cultures, there's also a reason to be careful. We can't underestimate the power of personal values when it comes to sociology of clothes either. The meaning of deviations is basically to fight back against the social norms and if the culture or the society is very restricting, the role and meaning of deviations becomes bigger (the creation of punk culture for example). Looking again at Japanese culture, that has its long traditions of being a hierarchical society, with its own rules and correct behavior, it is no surprise that the fairly young and flamboyant youth cultures blossom and have become a part of the culture.

Even though Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions was originally meant to examine the work environment and the prevalent values, to some measure, it can also be applied to the differences in social style in different nations. It gives an idea of how permissive and equal a culture is, what is the community pressure towards individuals and what are the motivating factors inside of a society. And even if on an individual level this wouldn't apply, it gives an idea how the social style is and especially how the differences are shown.

Finally, if you compare Finland to Sweden and Finland to Brazil, the scores are closer between Finland and Sweden. In fact, Finland with its scores, is rather far from those of Brazil, which indicates that those cultures are fairly far apart from each other. Which is also why a Finn would more probably experience culture shock in Brazil rather than in Sweden.



(20)

Adam Wiseman,
National Geographic 2017

"A traditional street celebration known
as a *calenda* happens almost daily in
Oaxaca to celebrate special occasions
like weddings or baptisms".



(21)

Lauri Rotko
Lavatanssit (Folkdances)
Anna-magazine, 2016

Still today, a very popular summer
hobby in Finland, where it matters
what one wears.



3.2. THE FINNISH WAY

If we take a look at Finnish stereotypes that are based in looks, they would probably be Marimekko's classic stripe shirt, Nokia's rubber boots and the 'Finland-tracksuit' (Kolbe, Mänpää, Saarikangas, Sarantola-Weiss, 2004). Without forgetting the immortal wind suit from the list of course. But with a quick afternoon tour in the city center of Helsinki, it is hard to find any of these. Instead, a quick glance over people shows a lot of dark colors and comfortable clothes, although relevant to mention, at that moment it was winter and it was fairly cold. Again, as stated before, of course these are "stereotypes, fixed notions about persons in a certain category, with no distinctions made among individuals" (Hofstede, 2001, p.14). They usually tell more about those judging, but there's also some truth in there: Nokia's rubber boots have been manufactured over hundred years and have become some kind of classics and Marimekko being the biggest fashion and textile company in Finland with its own stripe classics, Jokapoika or Tasaraita shirts. Since design and art is a visual glimpse to the current cultural scene, the aim is to highlight as an example certain features that are distinct to Finnish culture.

(22)

Ceramics and especially glassmaking in Finland have its long traditions. Designers of Finnish glass are known for the high quality of their utility glassware (Koivisto, Finnish Modern Design, 1998). Originally Alvar Aalto took part to a glass design competition in 1936 with the Aalto vase, inspired by the waves ("Aalto" in Finnish) in the water. He won the first prize and became one of the most recognized glass object in Finland. Compared to the decorative objects of the time, the simple yet organic shape of this vase was a revolutionary statement (Iittala, retrieved from <https://www.iittala.com/collections/iittala/alvar-aalto-collection/c/alvar-aalto-collection/intro>). Picture: Fiskars Finland

(23)

The classic Kantarelli vase was designed in 1947 by Tapio Wirkkala. His designs scream for nature, and this vase gets its inspiration from the chanterelle mushroom. The strikingly elegant piece of Wirkkala art glass is mold blown with delicate line cuts on the surface (Sirén, 2015). Picture: Tapio Wirkkala Rut Bryk Foundation



The Iso Suomu print, designed by Annika Rimala for Marimekko in 1966, is a clear and simple, yet elegant and peaceful interpretation of fish scales. On this picture a smaller scale version of the Iso Suomu. Picture: Marimekko





(25)

The Teema (theme) tableware pattern, which was designed by Kaj Franck for Arabia 1979-80, has been in production since 1981 and includes about 20 pieces. Basic modern comfort and variety of use, with an inherent flexibility that enables the different parts to be used with other tableware patterns. Franck's design has been admired for its sensual minimalism (Vihma, Finnish Modern Design, 1998).

Picture: Finnish Design Shop

(26)

Domus chair was designed in 1946 by Ilmari Tapiovaara for Domus Academica as a student housing chair. It has gained its timeless value through its functionality: it is ergonomic and stackable, it works both with or without upholstery and it was a self-assembly furniture, which at the time was revolutionary.

Picture: Bukowskis



1998). So even the oldest cultural references that are considered to be typically Finnish, are in a bigger perspective fairly young. The independent Finland had a different polity compared to the rest of the Nordic monarchies, that had distinct requirements for the artefacts as well as to the visual subjects (Korvenmaa, 2009). However, a strong craft tradition has ensured development of the Finnish design, and that way contributed to some recognizable design classics. Especially textiles, like the rugs, ryijy, are one of the oldest artefacts that have had significant impact on the subjects in Finnish design (Korvenmaa, 2009).

In the 1930s the common style in Nordic countries, including also Finland, was changing from classicism to modernism (Korvenmaa, 2009). The desire was to typify the ability to be up-to-date, to be modern; and it was not long until that modernism commonly changed to be called functionalism, where the historical or stylistic starting points were replaced by functionality (Korvenmaa, 2009).

Austere conditions and natural landscapes. Purity and function – these expressive terms could almost be synonymous with Finnish design (Kalha, Finnish Modern Design, 1998). Looking at the design classics such as Teema (Theme), Domus, The Aalto Vase, Kantarelli (Chanterelle) or Iso Suomu (Big Scale), it is not hard to sign the statement. Needless to say, northern climate and the forestry yet rugged landscapes that have served its inspiration to many, have always had its importance to Finnish design, whether it's the source of inspiration or the spareness of the material. Similar features repeat in the popular designs that have gained their place as classics. Vihma lists naturalism, straightness, minimalism, elegance and careful surface finish that continue to be expressed in current production (Vihma, Finnish Modern Design, 1998).

So does that also tell something about who we are as a group of people?

Klaus Helkama has been researching Finnish values in his book *Suomalaisten arvot* ("Finnish Values" 2015). He says that people are generally the same all around the world, everyone appreciates benevolence, but there are still small, yet noticeable differences in cultures. Two distinguishable differences where Finnish people's values are higher from other Europeans, are universalism, which includes valuing nature and equality, and secondly conformity and safety (Helkama, Studio55 interview, 2015).

Referring to the previous chapter and Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, Finland is considered to be a feminine society. In these societies interest is in quality of life where consensus, equality and solidarity are appreciated. People value their free time and well-being (Retrieved from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/finland/>).

With the dimension that measures individualism, Finland scores high and is thus considered as an individualistic society. This means for example that being offended is shameful. Following the society's norms is usually considered rather profitable (Retrieved from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/finland/>). Generally, this feature can also be seen in the manner of valuing personal space and a simple life.

Finland has a high preference to avoid uncertainty, which means, that there is an emotional need for rules, "time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm and security is an important element in individual motivation" (Retrieved from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/finland/>). Life needs to be safe, it needs to be in order and to some level, it needs to be predictable, just as some of the design classics. Helkama states in Studio55 interview: "We Finns are quite rule orientated when compared to many other countries. Also honesty is very important. If you look especially the Protestant Europe, this is the only part of the world where the majority of people say that they can trust other people" (Retrieved from <https://www.studio55.fi/hyvinvointi/article/suomalaisten-tarkeimmat-arvot-eroavat-muista-eurooppalaisista/4715256>).

Generally, Finnish culture is something where work life is highly appreciated, although free time and well-being is as important. Minimalism and functionality are repeated in aesthetics because that is familiar. People tend to live simple life, where nature has a huge role and personal space is valued.

People's values usually change very slowly. The older people get the more permanent the values are as well. And even though there is a slight wind of change to be seen towards being more daring, at least when it comes to the design scene, the change happens very slowly. As Helkama states, around the age of 25 our values stay approximately the same for the rest of our lives (Helkama, YLE news interview, 2017).



(27)

Above

Markus Jokela

Vantaa 1999

From the book: *Oi maamme!*

4

RESEARCH APPROACHES

As stated in the beginning, I wanted to hear the answers from other people in order to gain as truthful an understanding as possible of the needs and contexts around the topic, what it was that people wanted to say through their clothing.

I wondered how accurately the image of Finns translates into the sartorial habits. What kind of language are people speaking, is it more modern or something very conservative? Do we even talk in a very similar language of clothes? Are we just as low-context with the clothing as we stereotypically are with the actual speech? And how to handle all the data visually?

INTERVIEWS AND SURVEY

4.1.

Before I started the interviews, I had already begun the literature reviews, which helped me with the preparation. Too short an interview would leave me with more questions than answers, too long would bore the interviewee. I needed to find a neutral place and I needed to find the right approach. But above all I needed to find the right questions, which proved to be rather hard. As mentioned in the previous chapter, minimalism and elegance repeat in some of the Finnish design classics. I was eager to know whether that showed in the answers as well; what did the people value in beauty? Also, Donald A. Norman's book *Emotional Design* left me thinking, what were the factors people found important while choosing their clothes. As Norman (2005) states in his book, in order for a design to be appealing, it needs to have an impact on visceral, behavioral and reflective design. I tested the questions with my friends, and then chose the ones I thought could give me the best openings to continue the conversation with the interviewees.

I started by interviewing people around me, basically just relatives and friends. It wasn't important how much they seemed to be interested in their sartorial habits, it was more valuable to hear people with different opinions. I ended up interviewing 13 people altogether. The interviews weren't too long, I had 15 questions that I asked all the interviewees (Ref 1), but I decided to conduct a semi-constructed interview, allowing new ideas to be brought up so that it would be more like a conversation between people. I asked about people's sartorial habits as well as their values and feelings about being a Finn.

I did gain some intriguing knowledge, and due to my own prejudice, was surprised how aware and interested people seemed to be about their sartorial habits. Almost all the interviews seemed to know what they wanted to wear and even more what they didn't want to wear. Nature was highly valued as well as honesty. Social pressure determined what people considered to be appropriate dressing for themselves, and if diverged from that, shame was felt quite easily.

Most importantly however, I discovered that this amount of data was not sufficient. As much as I loved to hear about people's individual opinions about their

sartorial habits, I realized that I needed to gain understanding on how the people are as a group in order to get an overall picture. After all, it is the group of individuals eventually, that together determines how something is defined. One answer is valuable, but the group forms the power. Nonetheless, after conducting the interviews I felt anxious about how to describe what I heard into a visual collection. How to transfer the words that I had on the paper into something visual and tangible?

It was after the interviews that I ended up choosing to use position map as part of the research method. This became a big part of the research and the whole thesis, which I will come back to more precisely in the next chapter.

I decided to conduct a survey; to reassess the findings from the interviews. The questions of the survey were based on the interviews; the conversations certainly helped me to highlight the factors that were important concerning the survey, and on the other hand, to spot those questions that still needed to be asked, but most importantly, made me find the positioning map.

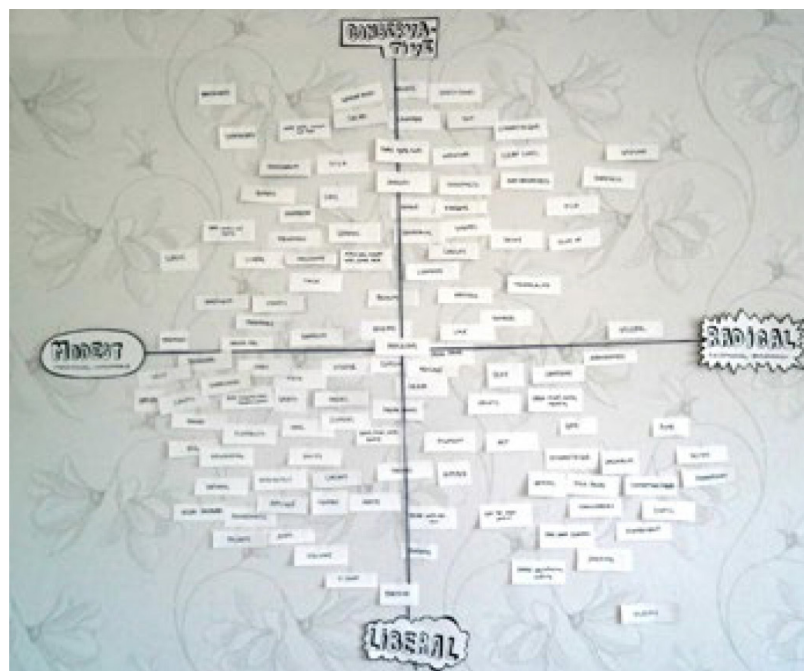
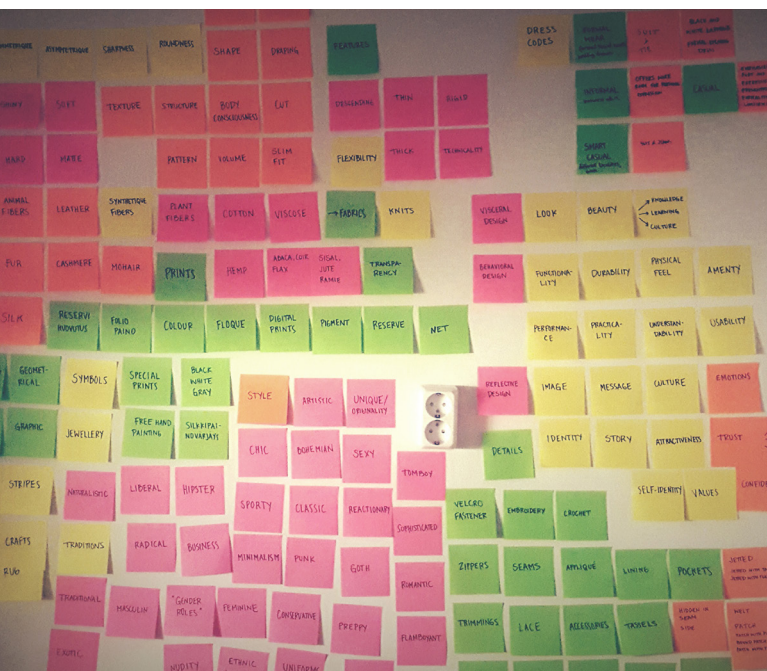
The purpose of the survey was to research opinions in the Finnish adult population, which made the unit of observation the people in that group. However, I need to emphasize that the goal of the thesis was not to cover the language of clothing in Finland as a whole, which means that the survey wasn't based on a simple random sampling that would allow me to generalize the results to consider the whole population. Instead, since I sent a link to the survey openly to my friends and family through Facebook and email, and asked people to also share and send it forward, the survey was more based on non-probability samples. The selection is discretionary, and the probability of the unit of observation to be chosen is unknown.

The survey eventually consisted of 11 questions, including multiple-choice questions as well as open questions (Ref 2). I got 101 answers all together. The youngest respondent being 18-years old, oldest 70-years old, however most of the respondents being young, 25-33-years old, educated and located in the southern part of Finland around big cities. Different age groups, gender or education didn't play any significant role in the answers.

4.2. POSITIONING MAP

The idea of using a positioning map as the method of interpreting the research results from interviews and the survey came quite unexpectedly, partly unintentionally, by following intuition.

Fashion design is such a complex, multileveled phenomena that it seemed hard, to say the least, to create a system that would allow me to point out what exactly made me choose certain elements to be Finnish. I felt stuck. I started to wonder



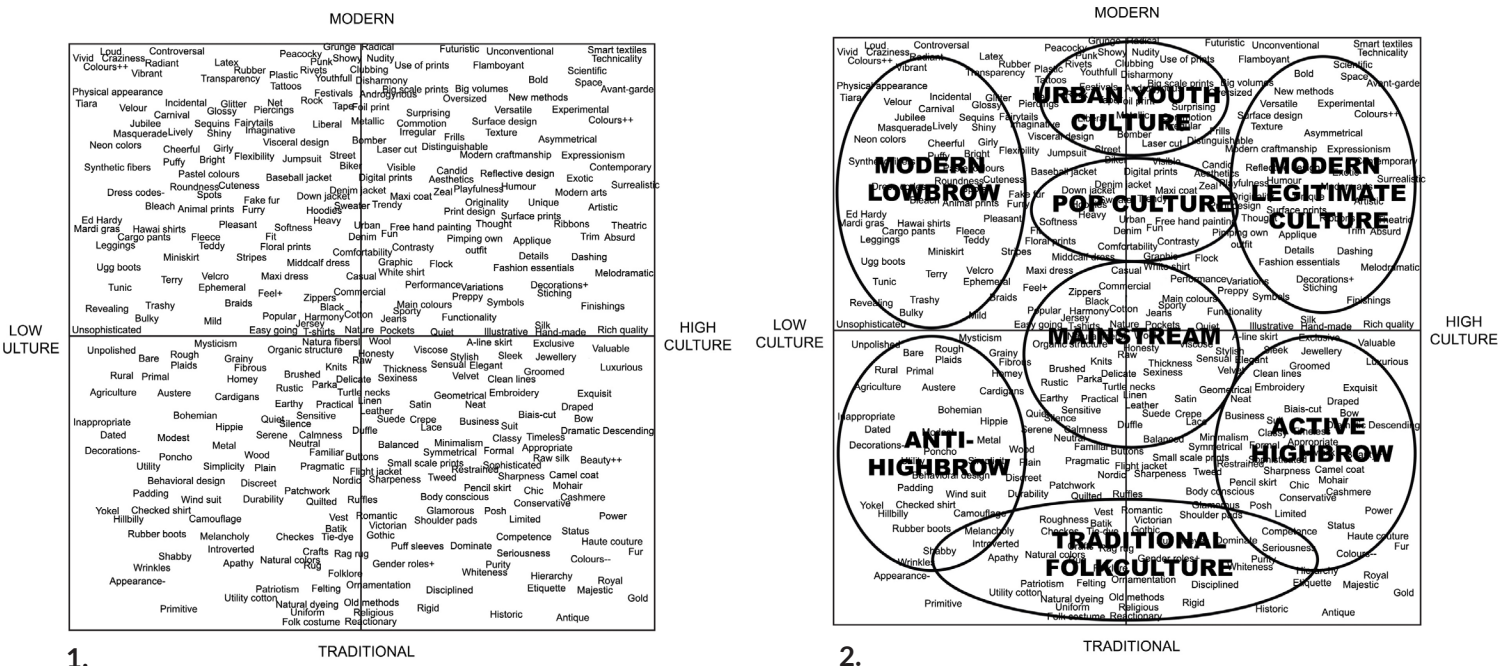
what the factors, meanings, values, symbols or examples that actually create the language of fashion design are, trying to be as thorough as possible. And to get me going, I simply wrote down to post-it notes words that described those elements without any more profound reason at this point, I was basically converting something visual into words. I ended up having a wall full of post-it notes, consisting of patterns, constructions, values, tools, symbols, materials, garments, moods, shapes, styles, fabrics etc.

I needed some way to conceptualize the words. Once I had the post-it notes on the wall, I realized that they created the world of my interpretation of fashion. I wanted to categorize the post-it notes, so first I tried to arrange the words on the wall linearly from modest to radical or from liberal to conservative, but it always seemed too simple and narrow-minded to be representing my interpretation. So I added two more ends to it. This made a lot more sense giving also the possibility to widen the perspective. I created the first version of my positioning map. It was then that I realized I wanted to use the position map in the survey also. I wasn't going to be the one choosing the elements, it was going to be chosen randomly by the respondents, without me controlling it.

Yet, I struggled quite a bit with finding the right words to fit at the end of the lines; that would frame the area of the post-it notes and put a value to the words. They needed to describe on a very general level the cultural aspect of fashion in people's lives. It is at that time I luckily came across the book 'Suomalainen maku' (Finnish taste) by Semi Purhonen and his team (Purhonen & Gronow & Heikkilä &

The post-it notes on the wall that had the words describing clothing design in order to get me started.

The first clumsy position map I attached on my wall, as I struggled to find the right words to the two dimensions.



1. First map shows how all the words were placed on the map.

2. The second picture shows how the map is divided into 8 smaller categories. This division was taken from Sami Purhonen's book *Suomalainen Maku* (Finnish Taste).

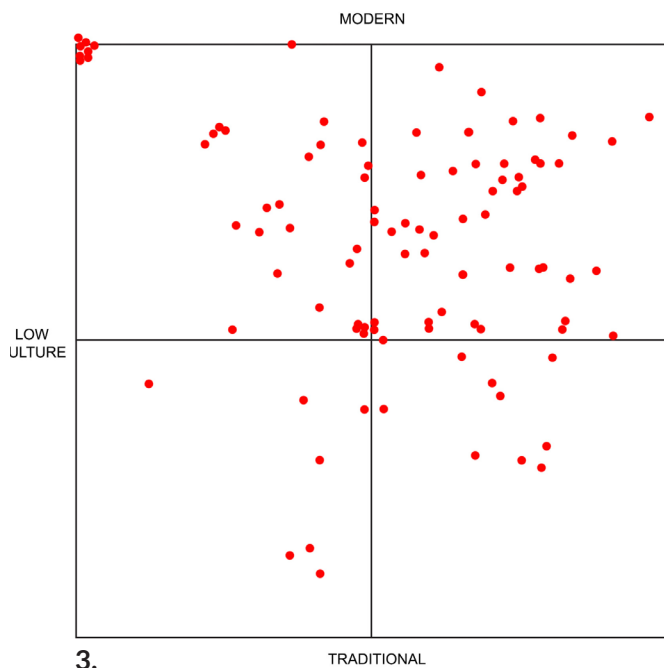
Kahma & Rahkonen & Toikka, 2014).

Semi Purhonen with his team comprehensively studied Finnish taste, cultural capital and lifestyles in 19th century Finnish society. Their research is based on the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's classical taste and distinction study. Semi Purhonen, with his team have gathered an extensive data of Finnish taste in music, literature, art, TV, movies, sports, dressing, food and eating, in other words, culture. This data they have eventually assembled in a thorough and graphical cultural map, based on the MCA method (Multiple Correspondence Analysis), created by French statistician Jean-Paul Benzécri (1992), and developed by his students Brigitte Roux and Henry Rouanet (2004; 2010).

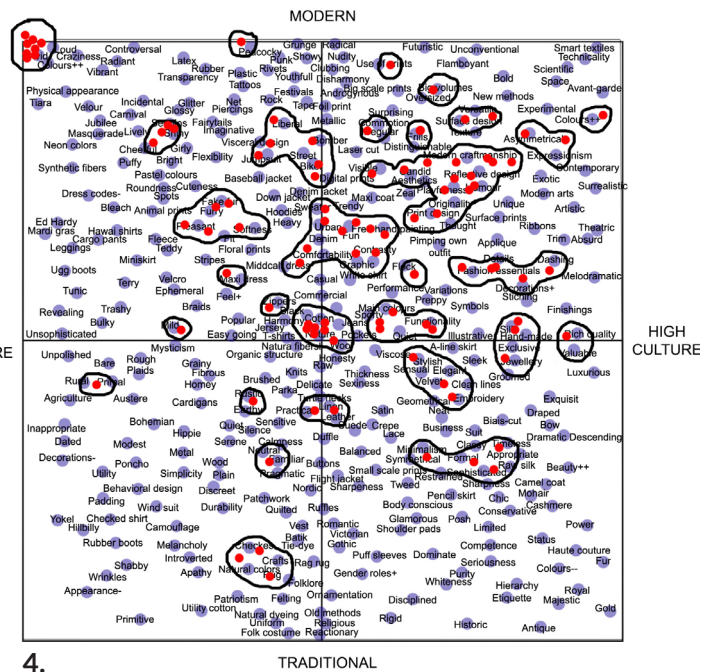
This cultural map was a model and an inspiration to the positioning map used in my own survey. However, my intention was not necessarily to use the MCA as a basis for the function of the positioning map. Instead, my study has a disparate nature, my own inspiration and the model came solely from the visuality of Purhonen's cultural map.

Semi Purhonen, with his team use a coordinate system, a "map" so to say, that shows two different dimensions, or axes, on the same geometrical space. The aim of MCA is to create a solution, in which the dimensions describe the structure of the collected data the best way possible (Purhonen & the team, 2014). The diverseness of the axes is essential: Purhonen and the team's research use dimensions such as modern and traditional, as well as legitimate and illegitimate. This became vital for my own study, since I realized those dimensions described the structure of my fashion oriented practices, "the words", just perfectly.

The meaning and the value of each modality, which in their case are the practices or the words that define the taste and culture, is determined by their position in relation to other modalities as well as the two dimensions: proximity means simi-



3.



4.

larity, remoteness dissimilarity (Purhonen & team, 2014).

Based on this, I created a positioning map, with an x-axis describing the low and high culture, and a y-axis to describe the modern and traditional structure. High culture, in this context signifies such activity, phenomena or object that is generally considered to be somehow high class, sophisticated and refined. Low culture is the opposite of this and signifies insignificant cultural value and poor informational content. Traditional indicates rituals or practices that have established and lived through generations, like folklore. Modern is obviously the opposite of this, representing everything considered to be rather new. However, at this point I also defined the modern or traditional dimensions to describe more Finnishness: what is considered modern or traditional here in Finland. Which means that I cut out, for example traditional folk costumes from other countries, like the Kimono or Sari. This gave me an opportunity to place the words on the map in an easier and more comprehensive way (1).

Although, as Purhonen and the team point out, and what is also relevant to my own map, in order to prevent misunderstanding while examining a discretionary map, it is good to remember a couple of things. Firstly, the map can't be read as literal rules about how things are related to each other, instead, the question is rather about probabilities (Purhonen, 2014). For example, it is not probable that someone who has piercings and uses a ripped denim jacket would also be using a traditional folk costume. It is possible though, but just not probable.

Secondly, it is easy to observe the map as four squares, but it is not a fourfold table. Purhonen affirms that it is possible to look at the maps by dividing the squares in four groups: the one on the top right would represent the modern high culture, the one on the low right would represent the traditional high culture, the square on the low left would speak for the traditional low culture and the one on the top left for the modern low culture. However, to only see the four squares in the map would be very simplifying and generalizing since culture is a more multi-level

3. The red dots on the this map represents the answers given in the survey.

4. On the fourth and final map, the red dots are circled. The blue dots represents each words on the map; that way it doesn't matter how long the actual word is. Those words left inside of the circles were the guidelines for the thesis collection.

phenomenon. That is why the map needs some completing in different categories (Purhonen & team, 2014).

Purhonen and the team are dividing, or circling the map roughly into eight different categories: the mainstream, modern legitimate culture, active highbrow, anti-highbrow, modern lowbrow, urban youth culture, traditional folk culture and pop culture (freely translated). Keeping this in mind, placing the words became more straightforward (2).

In the middle closest to the origo is the **mainstream-culture**. In this area, the words are fairly neutral and can't be defined either as modern, traditional or high/low culture oriented. Those factors can be seen and used by many people from any background, that doesn't categorize people to any specific group. For example, t-shirts or cotton are very neutral and undistinguishing features: the use of t-shirts doesn't necessarily tell a lot about its carrier, whereas wearing a suit is a far more distinguishing feature, that is something rather traditional and high culture oriented.

However, at this point I need to highlight that with the word culture, regarding the positioning map, I mostly mean those kinds of refinements of the mind mentioned earlier, such as education, art and literature.

The whole right side is high culture oriented, where people are interested in experiencing and participating in their culture on a more sophisticated level. The right top corner has **more modern basis**, one could say people are more interested in things like modern art, young designers, new and fresh looks, yet quality materials without forgetting the ecological aspect. In my positioning this meant valuables such as rich surface design or free hand painting. The bottom right corner has a more **traditional approach**. In Purhonen's map this meant visiting operas frequently or reading classics like Dostoyevsky. In my positioning map, it meant fashion essentials such as a wool coat or the little black dress, materials like fur or cashmere, elegance or suiting to name a few.

The left side is lower culture oriented. People are more passive or not interested at all when it comes to experiencing culture. On the bottom left side people are quite the opposite of the highbrow lifestyle of operas and Dostoyevsky, which also makes fashion seem rather unappealing. On the left top corner is **the modern lowbrow** area. Culture is experienced on a more modern, yet lighter manner: for example, by watching reality series or easy comedies. At the same time, fashion is also experienced mostly from the visual point of view. I interpreted this left side with words such as rural, primal or modesty and on the other hand neon colors, bleach or cuteness.

The urban youth culture is very modern and active, but can't be defined to be either high or low culture oriented. Music is a big influence, for example festivals, punk or grunge are included in this area; basically elements of being somehow

radical. Beneath that there is the more neutral group that is closer to the mainstream, **the neutral pop culture**. People are quite liberal and urban.

Finally, there is **the traditional folk culture** that is closest to the traditional area. It is quite wide, since it can include more or less highbrow activity. That group is more or less cherishing Finnish culture and craftsmanship on its more traditional level.

In the survey (Ref 2), I presented people this map blank, without the words. I carefully explained the structure of the map and what the dimensions meant. I then asked people to position themselves on the positioning map, where they thought they would fit the best (3). Once the survey was made, I collected all the answers into one map, and circled the areas around the people. Only after that, I combined the two maps: the one with the survey answers and the one with words of my interpretation of fashion. These words, left underneath the circled area, were now my guidelines for the whole collection (4).

I circled the areas around the people, not only to avoid misinterpreting the message told by someone else, but mainly to keep an element of surprise and the lack of control strongly present when implementing the research. All the ideas and inspirations come from the people, since the values were chosen more or less through chance: out of 365 words, where any of them had more or less an equal possibility to get chosen, 101 did. This method of approach represents a useful alternative or addition to the design process. It is quite close to grounded theory, where you are not going to know what you are studying until you have completed a significant amount of analysis. It certainly was a new method of approach for myself and forced me to look at a possibility to design something I wouldn't have necessarily chosen myself.

RESULTS

4.3.

To summarize, clothing interests people. Even if the outcome is moderately simple, the thought behind might be profoundly considered; people know how they want to be seen. It matters how the garment feels, looks and functions. Yet, people are also fairly concerned how they are being seen in the eyes of others; sociological discomfort that the outfit might cause were mentioned more often than the physiological discomfort caused for example by too small clothes. People feel rather modern, yet practical. As one of the interviewees summarized: "black is easy and makes everyone look good, it is quite common and boring though, all black 24/7 shows mostly insecurity. Print is a risk; it can be something totally amazing or absolutely horrible".

Favorite clothes were determined in three categories: how it looks, how it functions and what is the emotional value.

Mild	Visible	Vivid
Rural	Candid	Colors++
Primal	Aesthetics	Loud
Rustic	Quiet	Sequins
Earthy	Modern craftsman-	Shiny
Turtle necks	ship	Cheerful
Linen	Reflective design	Peacocky
Leather	Playfulness	Liberal
Practical	Humour	Visceral design
Familiar	Originality	Bomber
Checks	Print design	Jumpsuit
Crafts	Surface design	Street
Rug	Versatile	Biker
Stylish	Texture	Digital prints
Elegant	Asymmetrical	Fake fur
Jewellery	Expressionism	Furry
Velvet	Colours	Pleasant
Clean lines	Dashing	Softness
Embroidery	Fashion essentials	Sweater
Minimalism	Decorations	Urban
Symmetrical	Details	Denim
Timeless	Flock	Comfortability
Raw silk	Rich quality	Fun
Formal	Silk	Midcalf dress
Sophisticated	Hand-made	Free hand painting
Restrained	Functionality	Contrasty
Natural colors	Main colours	Use of prints
Pragmatic	Sporty	Commotion
Neutral	Cotton	Irregular
Appropriate	Nature	Frills
Exclusive	Wool	Valuable
Sensual	Zippers	Groomed
Folklore	Black	Thought
Oversized	Maxi dress	Big volumes

These are the 98 words that I got from the positioning map, and that I needed to use as a guideline for the collection.

The garment looks amazing or the brand might be special. It is not necessarily something that is used everyday. It is special from the other clothes, and it is only used occasionally when there's a reason for a celebration.

Garments that can be worn on many occasions and are easy to combine with other clothes. Comfort, casualness and good fit. It is a "trust garment", that is like a good friendship: it lasts through time and can always be counted on.

Emotional connection is strong. It is a garment that evokes warm and valuable memories, which makes it so special. Every time that piece of clothing is seen in the closet or put on, it is reminder of something pleasant and happy.

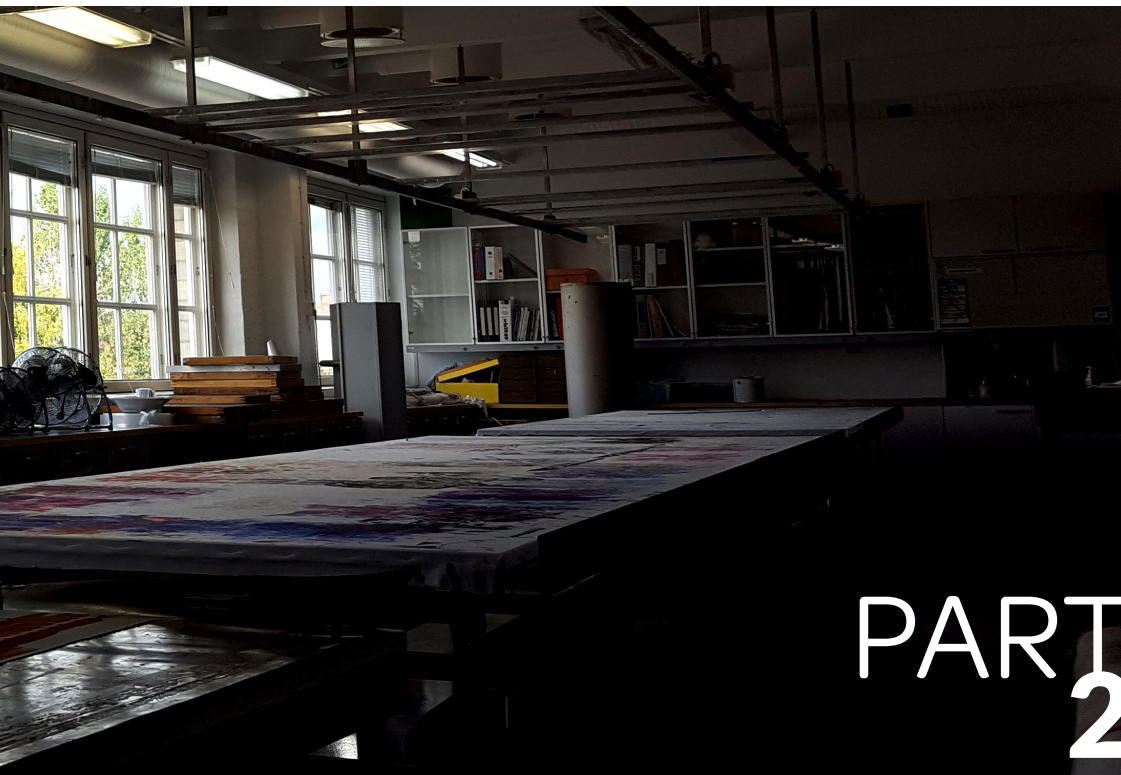
Over all, as was mentioned by Donald A. Norman in his book *Emotional Design* "the principles for designing pleasurable, effective interaction between people and products are the same ones that support pleasurable and effective interaction between individuals" (Norman, 2005).

Looking at the positioning map, people consider themselves more modern than traditional. The votes are rather dispersed, although some small areas can be seen more clustered than others, like the mainstream area in the middle as well as the far left upper corner. However, the mean of all results is located quite close to the mainstream on the modern side, yet more on the high-culture area.

As mentioned, I now had 101 words as my guidelines for the collection. Rather than having all these words randomly describing the collection, I needed some more some structure. This issue I will approach closer in the next part of the thesis.

To conclude, it is good to remember that the positioning map doesn't give an absolute truth of things. Instead, the map is to guide me to design a collection, as the word 'map' indicates. However, even though I tried to choose the words as thoroughly as possible, the reasons to include or exclude single variables, or how to place them, is of course arbitrary in certain way. There is nothing objective that would reason it. Which, again, I have never denied either. At the end of the day, it is always more or less someone's interpretation about the subject.





PART 2 DESIGN



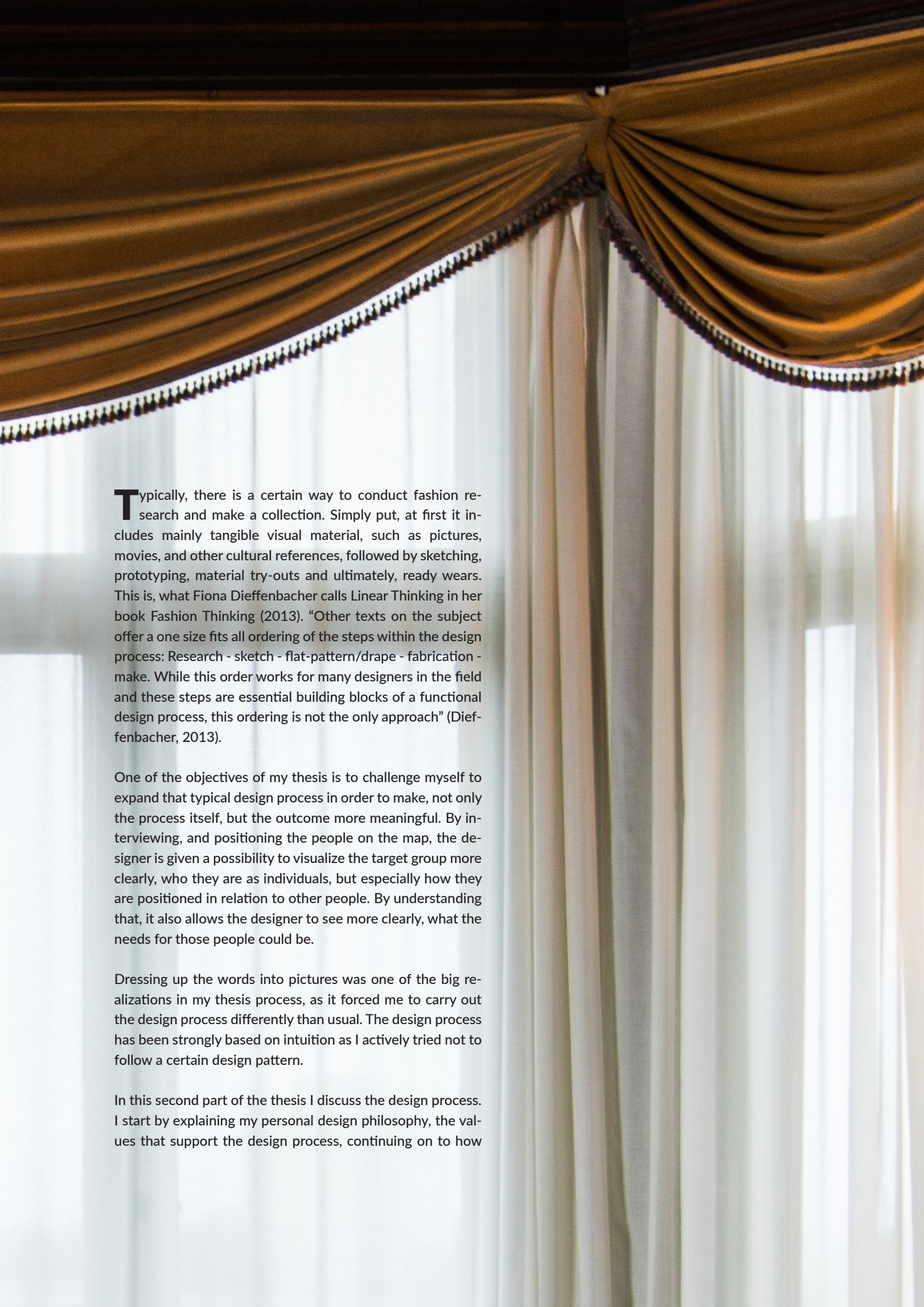
5

DESIGN PROCESS

“

DO ONE THING EVERY DAY THAT SCARES YOU.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

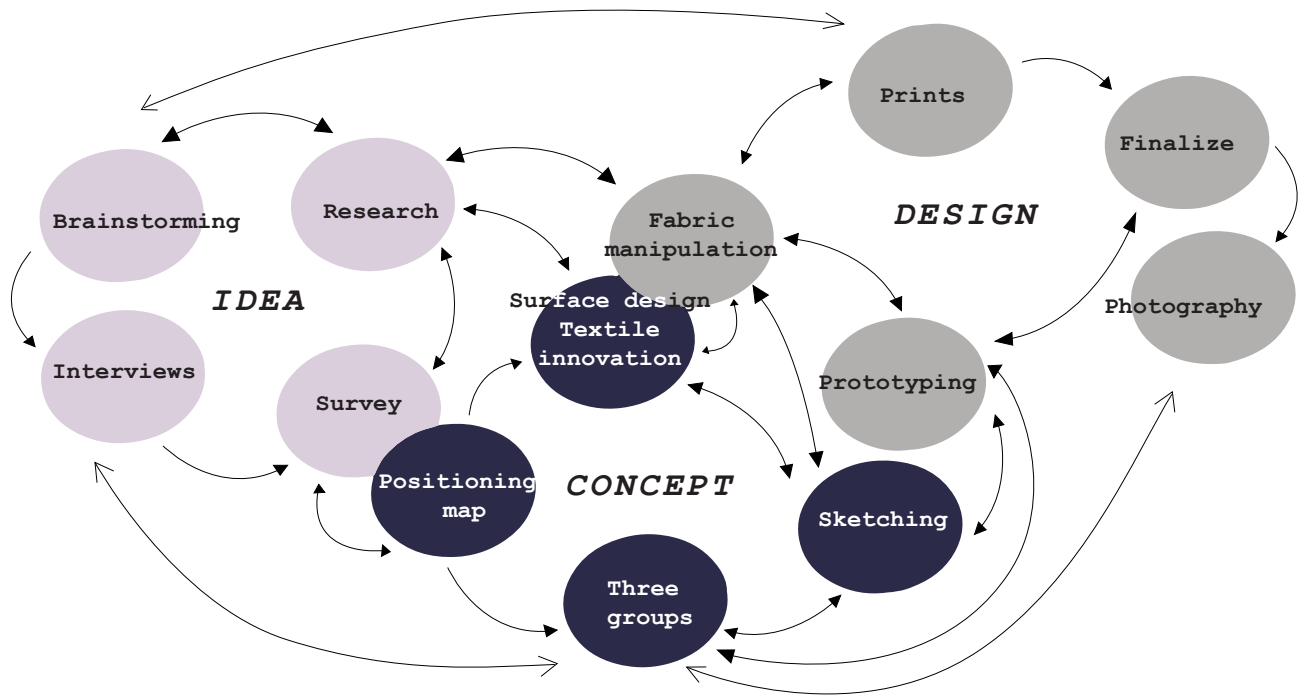


Typically, there is a certain way to conduct fashion research and make a collection. Simply put, at first it includes mainly tangible visual material, such as pictures, movies, and other cultural references, followed by sketching, prototyping, material try-outs and ultimately, ready wears. This is, what Fiona Dieffenbacher calls Linear Thinking in her book *Fashion Thinking* (2013). "Other texts on the subject offer a one size fits all ordering of the steps within the design process: Research - sketch - flat-pattern/drape - fabrication - make. While this order works for many designers in the field and these steps are essential building blocks of a functional design process, this ordering is not the only approach" (Dieffenbacher, 2013).

One of the objectives of my thesis is to challenge myself to expand that typical design process in order to make, not only the process itself, but the outcome more meaningful. By interviewing, and positioning the people on the map, the designer is given a possibility to visualize the target group more clearly, who they are as individuals, but especially how they are positioned in relation to other people. By understanding that, it also allows the designer to see more clearly, what the needs for those people could be.

Dressing up the words into pictures was one of the big realizations in my thesis process, as it forced me to carry out the design process differently than usual. The design process has been strongly based on intuition as I actively tried not to follow a certain design pattern.

In this second part of the thesis I discuss the design process. I start by explaining my personal design philosophy, the values that support the design process, continuing on to how



the research inspired me. I then explain how I identified the three concepts and how I interpreted the concepts into clothes. Finally, I introduce the women's wear collection that was shot in beautiful Sinebrychoff's villa and assemble the results of the process.

5.1. DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Just as important as it is for the designer to find personal aesthetics, is to be variable and versatile. And to be versatile, you have to try things, whose outcome might yet be unknown. When I started the Master's thesis I wasn't sure where I would end up. Throughout the research process, I've had space for coincidences and happy accidents, such as discovering the use of the positioning map as a tool to visualize the target group. It appears these coincidences have taken me further, regardless of the uncertainty I've felt.

For this reason, it was important to find a way to apply coincidences to the design process as well. Typically, when designing and creating, I often find myself in situations where I need to be in control. I wanted to loosen up that control, I wanted to trust the process. And therefore, I didn't plan the process to much itself, I let it lead me.

On the other hand, my design philosophy derives from my values. In terms of making a successful product, it needs to look good, feel good, but also it needs to work. Functionality is one key element in design that I thrive on. As Donald A. Norman mentioned in *Emotional Design*, a successful design has to excel at all levels: the visceral level where the look matters and first impressions are formed, the behavioral level where the function, performance and usability are the keys and the reflective level, which is steered by self-image, personal satisfaction and memories (Norman, 2005). This was something noted also in the survey.

Visualization of the thesis process, that summarizes the relationship between the research and the design.

*It resembles the 'Random process', introduced in Fiona Dieffenbacher's book *Fashion Thinking* (2013).*

The three stages; the idea, concept and design, give the core to the process. Starting from the idea stage, and ending to the design, however, at the same time mapping back and forth continuously.

In summary, as loose guidelines, the collection needed not only to look and feel good, the clothes also needed to be functional, they needed to reflect a thought and the process itself was allowed to be more or less erratic.

INSPIRATION

5.2.

I appreciate conceptualized design works and I enjoy challenging my own methods of creations, which is why I wanted to seek an alternative source of inspiration. I crave design processes that are made with a deeper level of awareness. At times, it seems like decisions in design processes are made on very superficial levels; is it enough if something is made just because it looks nice? This attitudinal approach was the driving force and the inspiration to develop my work.

Typically, when designing and creating a collection, I use visual sources of inspiration. Pictures mostly, references from movies, interesting materials and surfaces, books, maybe instructions on some traditional crafts, actual clothes and just a whole bunch of random stuff that I'd find in flea markets, recycling centers or my grandma's basement. Anything tangible really, found around the concept.

This time I wanted to approach the collection differently; I wanted to create a visual world that is based on something intangible. I wanted to base the source of inspiration to other people's statements of clothing and the words around design. Therefore, to make the collection more meaningful, I decided to see how other people interpret their culture as well as how they see themselves as dressers, and use that data to create something tangible. This approach reflects the inspiration straight from the people that possibly could use the garments themselves.

"Nature is a nest of peace. It can be a place for an adventure or it can also be something frightening. Nature controls all life, it gives visual beauty, affects to the mood and charges batteries, but it can also be cruel and unexpected". Timo 57

"Nature is important no matter where you are, but only in Finnish nature you really feel like at home. The connection with nature has always been important to me and I have grown up by spending a lot of time in nature". Ella 22

From these quotes, I got through the first interviews, we can see how the nature serves many purposes and entails a wide variety of emotions in people's everyday lives. It is therefore not surprising that it became obvious fairly soon that regardless of the background, nature was commonly important to the people who answered the survey. Nature had to be somehow part of the outcome.

However, the most important source of inspiration were the words of the positioning map, and the three categories created out of them. Therefore, the challenge was to create something visually coherent with the literary part, to create a



method to find the connection between the answers and the visual material. How to make tangible from intangible?

THE THREE CATEGORIES

5.3.

Questions, to be answered through the visual collection: How does the social style look? What is it that Finnish people possibly want to say through clothing?

CONCEPT

5.3.1.

The positioning map helped me to see where the people stand in relation to others and their culture. Now I needed to be more specific.

After gathering all the expressions that were left inside of the delimited area, I started to puzzle out those words and arrange different groups that had similar elements, without any specific goals for the outcome. I wanted to give a visual impression of who those people could be. Since the language of clothing is very complex, the goal wasn't to show one exact type of language, but rather to collect different elements of what a language of clothing could be and express those as clearly as possible through a clothing collection. This way I aimed to answer my research question, what kind of a language could Finnish clothing be?

I ended up having three different categories that represented the set of people who answered the inquiry. At this point however, I had three categories formed out of words that had similar elements or atmospheres, but yet, they were still somewhat out of context. For this reason, it was evident to create a clear concept around each of the themes; after all, concept design is a big part of fashion design. Using the words as inspiration, I invented titles for each of the themes, and from there created a visual world to describe the words and stylistically represent the language of clothing in each group.

These three themes each represent certain atmospheres and values, however, it doesn't mean that an individual couldn't be a mixture of the themes. The purpose of dividing the words into three categories was to visually convey the different elements more clearly and understandably.

It is also relevant to mention, that all the categories I created, were assuredly done by exaggerating the elements and features taken from the positioning map, in order to convey the message of different styles and atmospheres in each group more clearly. Throughout the design process, I kept these words close at all times.



Fashion essentials
 Decorations
 Details
 Rich quality
 Silk
 Functionality
 Black
 Stylish
 Elegant
 Jewellery
 Clean lines
 Minimalism
 Symmetrical
 Timeless
 Raw silk
 Formal
 Sophisticated
 Restrained
 Appropriate
 Exclusive
 Sensual
 Midcalf dress
 Contrasty
 Aesthetics
 Valuable
 Quiet
 Thought
 Groomed



(28)
 (29)
 (30)

QUIET DRESSING

5.3.2.

"Sand colored woolen jacket from Filippa K. It is timeless, fitting, light, warm and super stylish"

"Little black dress. Stylish and appropriate to several occasions"

The first group is called Quiet Dressing. The name came from the idea of how the language of the clothing would be in this group; people don't want to make a hassle out of themselves, but they are devoted to dressing well, which also means socially acceptably, quietly. The group is close to active highbrow, the status matters more than in the other two themes. The garments are appreciated and to some extension they are a tool to secretly show the status; in other words, the wealth is rather hidden in the quality of the material or excellence of the detailing, than exposed entirely. Other people's opinions matter, which is why the dressing is unnoticeably discreet. Simple sophistication and beautiful, symmetrical shapes as well as high quality in materials and fashion essentials are admired. Elegance, simplicity and formality describe the theme well.

Since the materials embody a big part of the general aesthetics, I wanted to start by choosing the right fabrics. As mentioned earlier, my aim was to build this theme, highlighting and exaggerating all the elements in order to convey my message more clearly, and therefore, I wanted this theme to be excessively pure and minimalist. Wool and silk represent an aesthetics of luxury and formality, black and white in turn simplicity and elegance. The quality needed to be thick and stiff as in formal dressing, on the other hand light and discreet as the quietness of this theme.

In all honesty, bare minimalism is hard. I started out by having a few classical pieces of clothing that I needed to include in this theme, chosen randomly by the people answering to the inquiry: the woolen jacket, the little black dress and the straight black pants. As you could imagine, in minimalism the looks are fully exposed, and no matter how hard I tried to cover the outfits with prints and surfaces, it simply felt wrong. I had a few print options, as well as surface try-outs, but I ended up cutting them out; overall looks just became too agitated. In conclusion, I decided that the interest of the design needed to come from the simple, yet bold shapes rather than anything else. The looks needed to be stripped down, in order to reach the elegance and the simplicity that I pursued, which proved to be quite a challenge, since I enjoy rather fulfilling, colorful designs. Despite this, after struggling a while and being slightly outside of my own design comfort zone, I eventually managed to create a few looks of purity.





Black and white, simple surface designs, graphic prints, elegance and simplicity were some of the aimed characteristics. However, in the end I decided to keep the look rather minimalistic and stripped back.

5.3.3. ARTISANAL

"My mom's old, white cotton dress from Vuokko Nurmesniemi, with metallic pressure buttons. The garment has a story and the cotton fabric has worn out to be nice and soft. The shirt has a great fit; it is rather straight and fits well on the shoulders. Depending what you wear it with, it can be both formal, sophisticated clothing as well as casual everyday garment."

The second category is called Artisanal and out of the three groups, the most down-to-earth one. Keywords for this group are modern craftsmanship, roughness, earthy and rustic. Easy, comfortable dressing and carefreeness in style, as well as rich surface design are conducting elements. Hence, the pleasant feeling of the garment is essential. Common sense, simple life as well as appreciation and understanding towards the environment, and the community are the steering values.

Since modern craftsmanship was one of the defining aspects of the category, material and surface designs were decidedly highlighted. Given that, I started to look for ways to create appealing surface designs, and used the forestry nature around me as big influence when it comes to colors and materials. Colors needed to be discreet: easy to approach, natural, not too flagrant. I made several try-outs without really clearly defining what the outcome should be, and ended up choosing a couple of different surface designs for further development.

I was aiming to capture an atmosphere that would resemble something traditional or that would remind me of something familiar. I pictured one of my own *sielunmaisema* ("soul landscape", *landscape that makes you feel like home, 'this is my heritage, this is where I belong'*): my grandma's place, with the rug on the wall, a cuckoo clock next to it and her knitting on her dear rocking chair. From envisioning that, I created the diamond patterns and the rug-resembling surface design to the collection; something personal from my mummola (grandma's house).

The rug-resembling surface design was made out of thin wool and created through testing and intuition. It was first hand painted, then ripped into few centimeter strips with the fringed edges, and finally sewn together as a surface. It gives a very soft and furry, yet crafty and rustic feeling to the fabric. It resembles a rug, yet it is light enough to be sewn to a garment. Moreover, this method enables the coloring to flow on the surface most smoothly and naturally as can be considered in this theme.

Natural movement was also something that I was pursuing when working with the try-outs. I wanted to somehow add motion to the garments, and for that came the fringes. Fringes gave me an opportunity to add curiosity and attraction towards an otherwise more simple and quiet look.

As well as in Quiet Dressing, I had a couple of garments that needed to be includ-



Neutral
 Maxi dress
 Mild
 Rural
 Primal
 Rustic
 Earthy
 Turtle necks
 Linen
 Practical
 Familiar
 Checks
 Crafts
 Rug
 Cotton
 Nature
 Wool



Hand-made
 Flock
 Folklore
 Modern craftsmanship
 Reflective design
 Surface design
 Texture
 Frills
 Free hand painting
 Jumpsuit
 Furry
 Pleasant
 Softness
 Comfortability
 Natural colors
 Pragmatic



ed into the collection: a jump suit and a maxi dress. Apart from that, I wanted the designs to be pleasant to wear, practical to use, yet intriguing to look at. Therefore, the shapes were rather minimalistic and plain, I was cutting down all the unnecessary seams and drapes and tried to keep the patterns relatively straight. Since the shapes are fairly simple, decorativeness played a big role in the designs; I didn't want the overall look to be too minimalistic or simple.

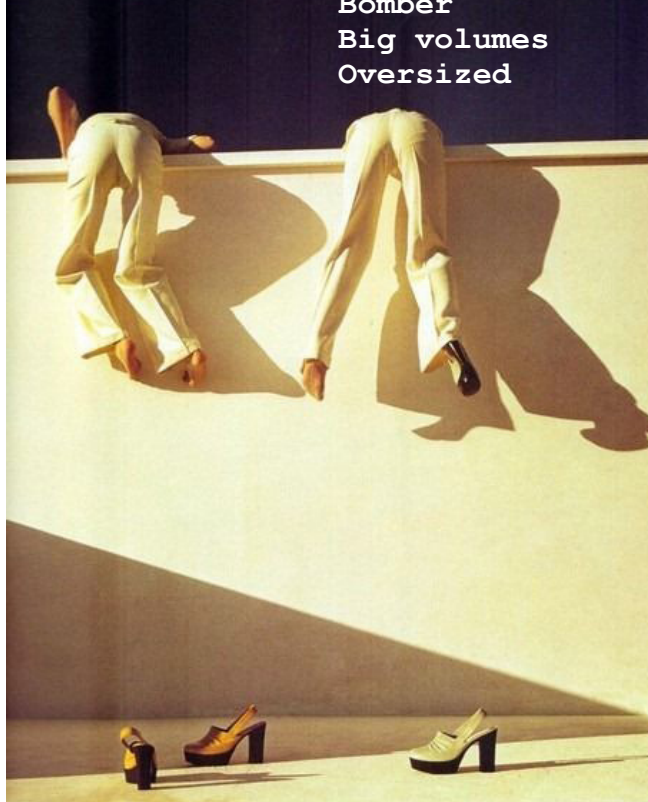
(31)
 (32)
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Candid
Use of prints
Embroidery
Asymmetrical
Commotion
Irregular
Fun
Sweater
Urban
Denim
Street
Dashing
Main colours
Sporty
Biker

Digital prints
Fake fur
Vivid
Loud
Sequins
Shiny
Cheerful
Peacocky
Liberal
Visceral design

Bomber
Big volumes
Oversized

Expressionism
Colours
Versatile
Playfulness
Humour
Originality
Print design
Visible
Leather



(34)
(35)
(36)
(37)

OFF BEAT

5.3.4.

"Bomber jacket. Practical, pleasant to wear and easy to combine into other clothes"

"High-quality street sweatpants with zippers. Comfortable and cool. My stuff won't drop from the pockets when running"

"Only the skillful can employ them (*"vulgar words" in dress*) without some loss of face, and even then they must be used in the right way" (Lurie, 1983, p.5). The third group, called Off Beat is a mixture of more experimental and visually louder people. As if they would dance slightly to their own beat, hence the name. Out of all three groups, this one is the most modern; all kinds of popular cultures and city life are found intriguing. In this group individuality plays a bigger role, which can be seen in the colors and prints among others. Street style as well as urban lifestyle along with a cool attitude are strongly present. Life is not taken too seriously; goofiness is certainly affirmative. On the other hand, functionality is equally important. The garments need to be practical to use, and detailing like pockets only increase the value.

In order to attract the attention, colors and prints play a big role right from the beginning; five garments out of seven are covered with a print. I wanted prints that would agitate, cause some commotion to the garment, they needed to be loud and bold. First, I mainly hand-drew a number of different abstract shapes and forms using ink to find interesting figures or patterns to use. One of the prints I have in the collection, I took straight from those ink testings, scaling it up from the original picture. It looked drawn with an ease, simple yet somehow humorous. I decided to make most of the prints as digital prints, which allowed me to use more colors and smaller details inside the prints. The second print was a mixture of different elements I had used in previous themes, like the diamonds, or print sketches that I had made earlier. I scaled those down and combined them in a more geometrical yet asymmetrical print, and finally, added embroidery on top to emphasize the three-dimensionality. The final digital print was formed by a coincidence when accidentally combining the second print with an older picture of mine. Nonetheless, it ended up looking exactly right, abstract and agitative.

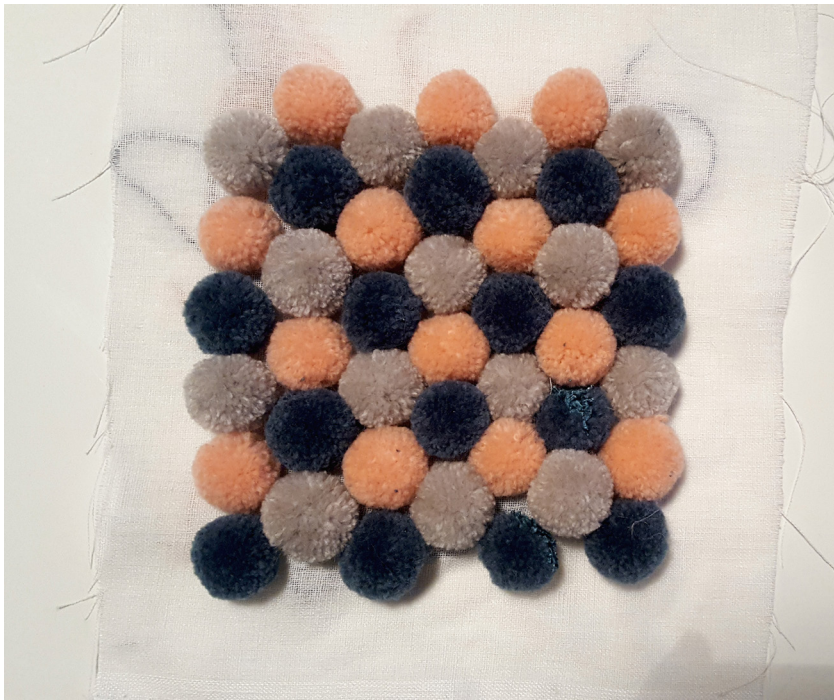
Certain fabrics and rousing surfaces were relatively crucial to this theme. I wished to have a couple of eye-catching, fascinating fabrics that would loudly scream for attention. I was fascinated by the furry surface I already had on the Artisanal group and therefore wanted to develop that same furry texture into the third theme, with a more urban vibe. I made a fake fur bomber whose front was stuffed with pompoms. I needed to have structure in the overall look, which is why I end up rolling hundreds of round woolen pompoms. It looked fun and bold.

The bomber jacket as well as jeans and a sweater were the garments in this theme that needed to be included to the collection. Urban style as well as youthfulness along with the functionality were steering factors when designing with this

theme. A challenging, yet essential part of the pattern making was the asymmetry, which I thought would nicely break anything traditional and add the value of uniqueness and individuality. I was also playing with the proportions, especially jackets and shirt needed to be oversized in order to create this urban, modern and carefree overall look.

As discussed earlier, this method of approach is fairly close to grounded theory. This gave me undoubtedly the possibility to design something with an element of surprise, and therefore, I was led to design concepts wider than my own range, trying new things slightly outside my own comfort zone. It is relevant to mention, that the first group, “quiet dressing” was the hardest for me, I felt nervous about the theme itself since I feel more comfortable with colors and surfaces. However, this approach demonstrates clearly the reality of the fashion industry. After all, if not an independent entrepreneur, that is more or less how every designer works in the business: under the company's ideology, under their concept, adapting. I also noticed that by limiting the design into the frames of each themes, I was able to expand my own creativity. The more I delimit the playground, the easier it is to break the boundaries.

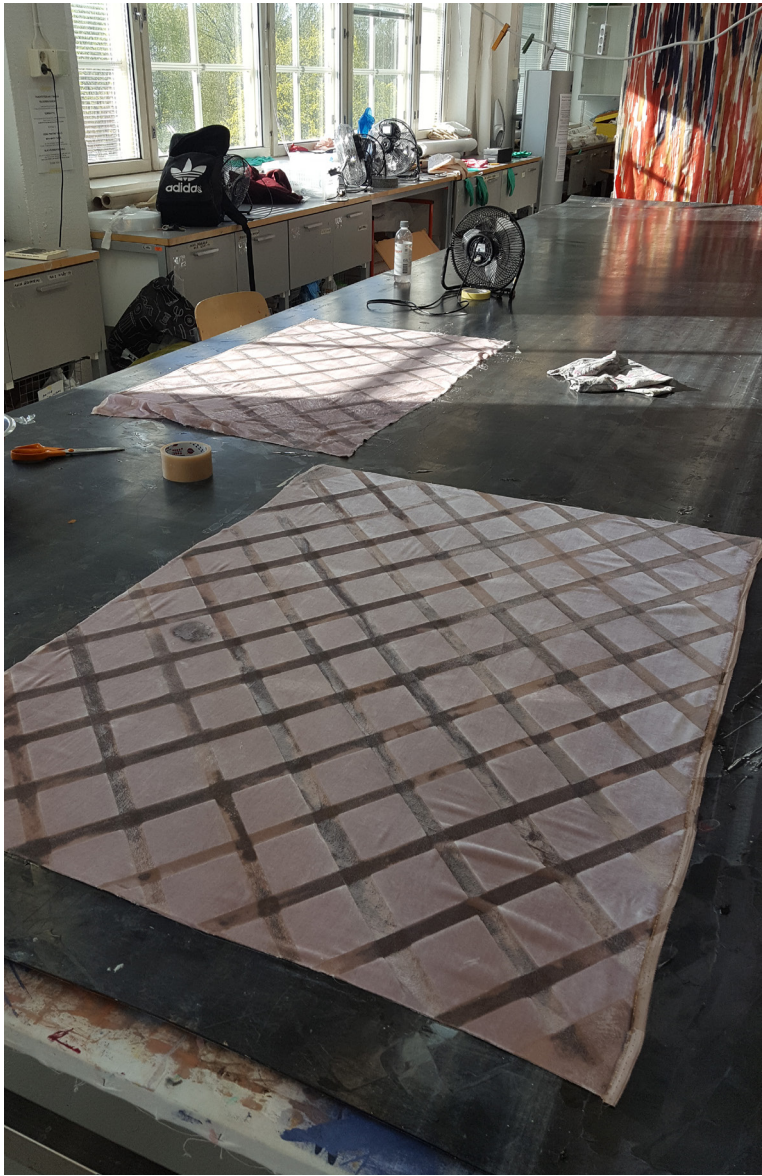




Colourful prints, sequins, embroidery and pompoms became important elements in this category. All the pompoms were made one by one, and then sewn together for more firm surface.







5.4. SKETCHING, PROTOTYPING AND FORMING THE COLLECTION

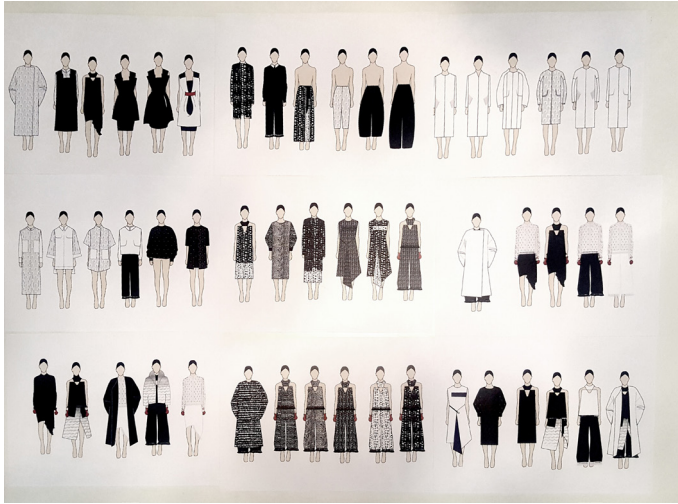
As I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the design process wasn't as linear as it usually is when I design. I allowed myself to trust the intuition, rather than follow a certain pattern. This made the design process more chaotic than usual, but also let me explore the subject, from the design aspect, more profoundly.

Ultimately, the clothes that I was designing were meant for someone I would call an average Finnish person, bearing in mind that the definition was highly leaning to my own research. Essentially I needed to design everyday wearable, functional clothes with a twist of piquancy that makes every garment unique and intriguing on its own way. Taking that into consideration, as well as the premises of each group, I started to sketch the looks, while simultaneously seeking for the right materials. First I drew by hand but soon with a computer as it is the fastest and most natural way for me.

The differences between each theme needed to be noticeable and each group needed to be unique, however, they also needed to be somehow connected to each other as a collection. Certain features I wanted to keep exclusively inside of a group, like the graphicness and minimalism in shapes and colors in Quiet Dressing, the craftiness in Artisanal or the asymmetry and vivid colors in Off Beat. Then again, in order to form a collection, certain features needed to be repeated, which made the formation of the collection more or less like a puzzle. I aimed to make the groups coherent by using a relatively continuous color and material world. The intention was to build the amount of color as well as visual interest towards the last theme, for example black is something that repeats in every category, but decreasingly towards Off Beat, the third theme. I created a multitude of possibilities from which, with the help of my advisor Noora Niinikoski, I edited and developed the ones that suited each group the best.

I ended up choosing three looks for each category. With any less looks, it seemed hard to convey the right message and atmosphere, and also, at the same time to have a complete collection with three recognizable groups inside of it. As the line up was tolerably chosen, given still room for changes and chances, I started to prepare all the fabrics and surfaces. I hand painted the wool for the furry surface design and printed the silk viscose velvet with the grid pattern, using both pigment and etch. At the same time, I designed all the digital prints and ordered them from the Netherlands.

I produced a number of versions of the products or specific features found within the garment, like pockets or collars. This was still an experimental phase, with the aim to identify the best functional product. As always in design work, it was a challenge to find the right fit and proportions. One-by-one after either improving or re-examining the prototypes, I ended up choosing the final pieces.





Sometimes the prototyping or sketching took me back to realize something new in each theme. In the first theme, Quiet Dressing, only after prototyping did I realize that the theme is more minimalist and it needed to be stripped down. It forced me to re-examine the whole concept of that theme, and gave me new inspiration. I didn't have a clear linear order in which I implemented the garments. Surely to an extent, certain steps, like sketching, were mostly followed by what seemed natural, like prototyping, but on the other hand, I found myself often going over steps to re-examine something or finding inspiration by first creating.

Reflecting the sketching and prototyping process, it sometimes felt rather chaotic and frustrating. On the other hand, it taught me that by switching the order of doing things, changing your own routines, may also change the way you think. Changing the action, may create new point of views.

Even though I find comfort in order, I realized that I can also endure a creative chaos. What at first might have seemed disorganized and complex, usually became simplified during the process. And if not, I questioned whether or not to keep it.

5.4. OUTCOME

The outcome of the language of clothing in this paragraph is considered to concern the results of my thesis, and is not covering the whole population. It is a suggestion what kind of a language Finnish clothing could be.



Even though I have divided the concept into three categories, the Finnish language of clothing is rather a mixture of all of them at the same time. Some perhaps leaning further towards certain category, but generally, the groups don't rule each other out.

Taken as a whole, according to the research, it seems the Finnish language of clothing is subtle, flowing and polite. Comfortability and easiness please the Finnish people. The dressing in the cities seeks for something comfortable yet urban. This means that the garment is easy to approach, it has something familiar on it, perhaps a recognizable shape or style, yet it is exciting, it has something appealing. It won't irritate or provoke, and if someone gives permission, it might even lark around a little. From time to time the voice is bold, even daring, but mostly the tone is kept there where it's comfortable and warm, settled and subtle. Mainstream pleases to a certain extent, there's safety in numbers.

Too posh or elegant language can be seen as weird and uptight, although this is dependent on the situation. In business life or fancy cocktail parties it is something that is rather expected.

The language of Finnish clothing is not loud or rude, and it expects the same from others. Rude is considered to be when wearing clothes that are for example too small or revealing, being somehow inappropriate. "Conversations" are rather delicate and sophisticated, needing space of its own, yet giving subtle hints of the personality to be read between the lines. There are most likely new clothes for each day and regardless of the outcome, the combinations have been chosen with time and care. It matters what words are being used in which situation; just blurring the words out without thinking is considered to be embarrassing. Although, at the same time, something that can't be completely avoided either.







































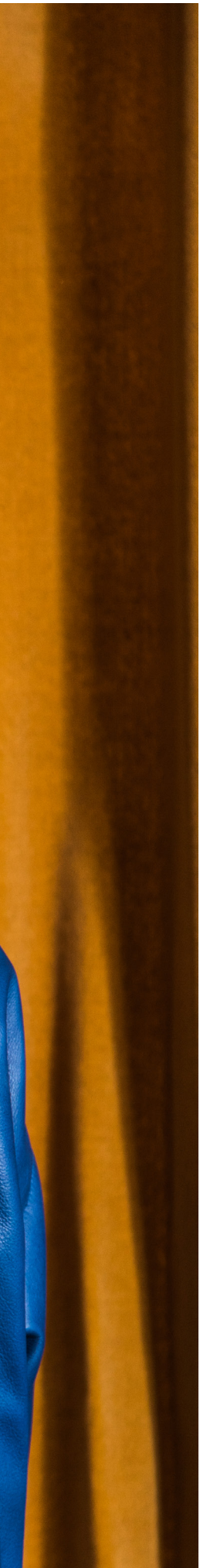












6

CONCLUSION

The goal was to visually answer what kind of a language Finnish clothing can be. Another main goal was to try a different kind of research approach for a collection, and through that, to show one possible method of how to make the elements in a collection more meaningful. The aim was to challenge myself as a designer throughout the process. I believe I did commendably.

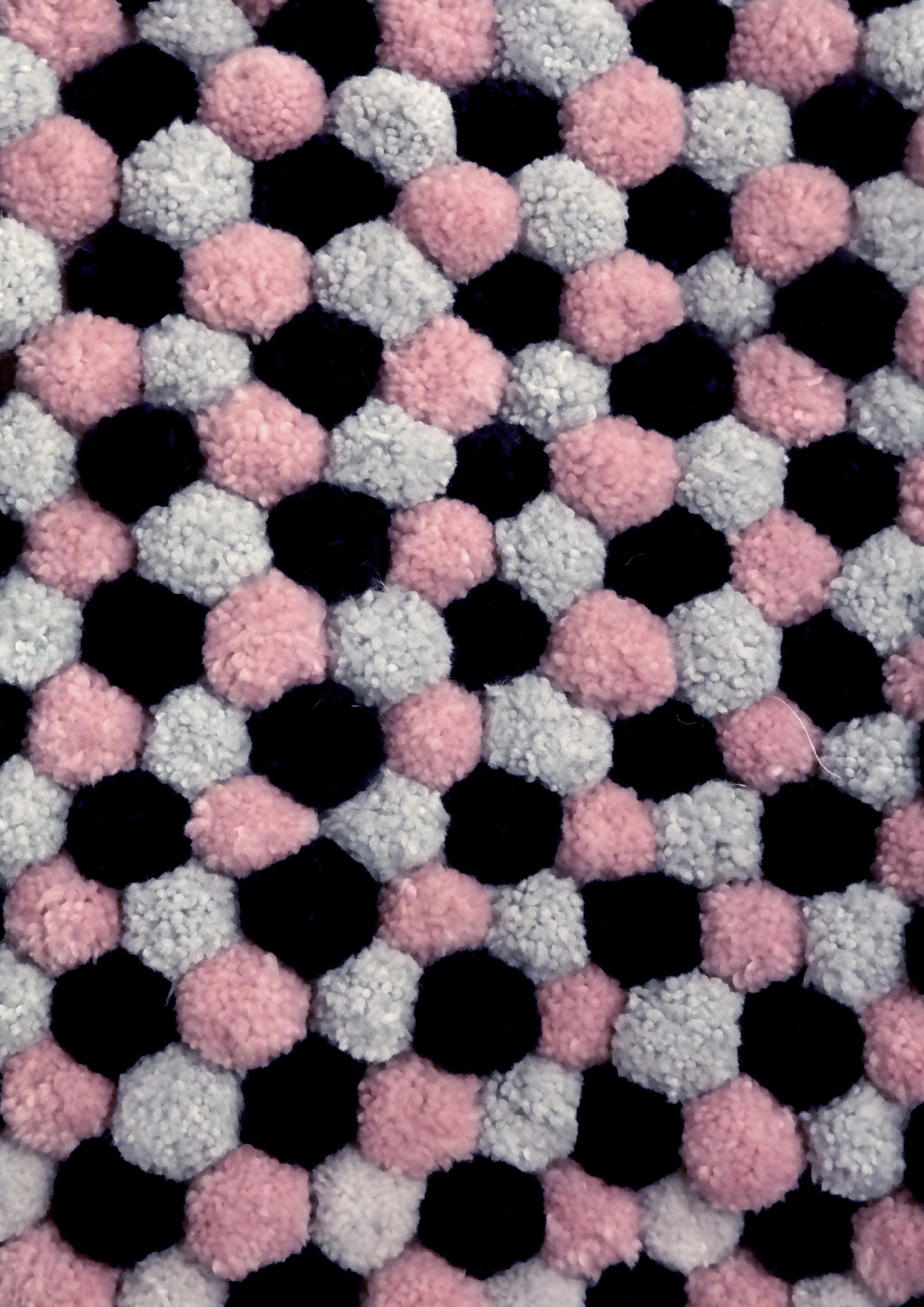
There were several outcomes from this project. I can say with confidence that I believe I was able to answer my research question by creating a visual interpretation of a Finnish language of clothing. I ended up designing 9 looks altogether, which consisted of 19 garments. The products address the subject through their surface design, colors, prints, materials and shapes as well. The collection shows influences of the traditional craftsmanship and some subtle hints of Nordic purity that are mixed together with the more modern and urban youth culture. Some of the essence of the Finnish culture is certainly captured in the outfits.

I believe I was able to demonstrate a possibility that gives more meaningful outcomes for a designer while creating a collection. By interviewing, and positioning the people on the map, the designer is given a possibility to visualize the target group more clearly, who are they as individuals, but more importantly, how are they positioned in relation to other people. By understanding that, it also allows the designer to see more clearly what the needs of those people could be.

For this thesis the whole process was just as important, if not more, than the outcome itself.

TO THE END

Over all this journey has been very educative, but at times quite exhausting as



well. I realized that I am quite stuck with my own routines and I feel comfortable when I am in control. The feeling of control comes when doing something I know I am able to do, when I follow my routines. These routines seemed to be very hard to break.

The process helped me to see what happens when you are not able to control everything, when you don't know what the outcome might be. It taught me to expand my own thinking, to go just a little further than planned and to try out things that don't seem the most comfortable ones.

The journey has also been longer than anticipated, partly because of the uncertainty and insecurity caused by the new approaches that were new and strange for me. I hadn't conducted any kind of surveys or interviews before this project, nor have I used them as a base for my designs, which sometimes felt a bit overwhelming. I changed my point of view and methods few times during the process before I found the right one. Behind every decision, there are at least a few failed tryouts and many more hours of work, which felt quite exhausting at times. Still, I wouldn't necessarily do much differently, since I consider this more as a learning process. I learnt how to conduct a survey: what needs to be thought before, where to do it and how to gather the information needed. For future reference, I know I would then work more efficiently.

In the end however, I found this whole project extremely interesting for myself, and I am very happy that I was able to develop it throughout the process. I learned to trust the process. It feels uncomfortable and it feels distressing, but as always, when being outside of your comfort zone, that's when you learn the most.

7

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REF 1

THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *How did you choose today's clothes?*
2. *How would you describe your style?*
3. *What is your favourite garment, and what makes it your favourite?*
4. *What do you value in clothes? What is a valuable garment?*
5. *What do you think about prints and colors? Do you dress colorfully? Why / why not?*
6. *What would you never wear?*
7. *What do you pay attention to when choosing your clothes?*
8. *Where do you get your clothes?*
9. *What are your most important values?*
10. *What does Finnishness mean to you? Does it show somehow on how you dress?*
11. *What do you think about traditions? Are they meaningful to you?*
12. *What does nature mean to you?*
13. *What does harmony mean to you? What is harmony?*
14. *What does beauty mean to you? What is beautiful?*

REF 2

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. *Gender*
2. *Age*
3. *Education*
4. *How much do you pay attention to your dressing?*
Scale from 1-10, where 1 is not at all and 10 is a lot daily.
5. *What factors are important when you choose your clothes?*
6. *What factors you consider important to the Finnish culture?*
7. *What would you never wear?*
8. *With three words, how would describe your style?*
9. *What is your favourite garment, and what makes it a favourite?*
10. *From the following picture, which one pleases you the most?*
Selection of 8 picture with people wearing different distinguishly styled clothes.
11. *Positioning map*

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Model
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